The Nation

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COMING IN FROM THE COLD

# Let's Terminate The C.I.A.

MARCUS RASKIN

The role of U.S. intelligence in a multilateral world. (Page 776)

COMMENTS BY: GORE VIDAL • DAVID CORN
GARY M. STERN AND MORTON H. HALPERIN
JOHN AND ALICE TEPPER MARLIN

JUN

EDITORIAL

## THE STINK MARKET

Wisconsin Power & Light has made the first sale of pollution rights under the Clean Air Act. The buyer, the Tennessee Valley Authority, figures it's cheaper to pay two and a half to three million for another company's pollution allowance than to purchase smoke scrubbers.

The T.V.A. deal was another victory for private enterprise in its ideological war with government. The triumphant phase of this conflict may have begun when Arthur Laffer drew on a cocktail napkin his famous curve showing how the government would raise more money by cutting taxes. Other brilliant minds came up with theories on how corporate takeovers increase efficiency, deregulation strengthens S&Ls and computer trading stabilizes the stock market.

Now industrial alchemists can turn toxic fumes into gold by selling pollution rights. Although Wisconsin Power sold the right to spew out a mere 10,000 tons of sulfur dioxide, this is only a beginning. In the stink market, the sky's the limit.

But why stop with pollution? There are other areas of government meddling that could be commodified—highway speed limits, airport noise levels, toxic waste disposal. And since we're talking about laws that were passed to save lives, why not consider those against homicide? There are some 40,000 murders in this country every year—most crimes of passion. Why not set up a national Murder Inc. as a murder-rights clearinghouse? Time to subject random violence to free-market discipline!

HATING THE BODY
ARTHUR C. DANTO

THE U.N. IN CAMBODIA
ARYEH NEIER

MADONNA IN ACADEMIA
DANIEL HARRIS

L.A. RAPPERS
ROBIN D.G. KELLEY

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# LETTERS.

### WE ARE NOT ENTHUSED

*Madison, Wis.*
I agree with Christopher Hitchens's fourteen negatives on Bill Clinton ["Minority Report," April 27]. I would like to add four items:

§ If Bill Clinton does nothing else about the crisis in race relations, he will at least set a less divisive tone.

§ Bill Clinton's appointments to all levels of the judiciary will be a vast improvement over those of the Reagan-Bush years.

§ Progressive Democrats in Congress will have slightly more room to maneuver with any Democrat in the White House.

§ Bill Clinton is not George Bush, and his running mate will not be Dan Quayle.

These are among the reasons I will unenthusiastically vote for Clinton.

*Leonard H. Cizewski*

### HEAD FOR THE TABS

*Salem, Ore.*
I'm appalled by the political reporting of Alexander Cockburn, Andrew Kopkind and Christopher Hitchens on Bill Clinton. They may consider themselves New York attack journalists, but they are just meanspirited rumormongers. They should work for *The National Enquirer.* They would find the pay better and the moral climate more congenial.

*Jim Conley*

### KINDLY REMOVE YOUR THUMBS

*Seattle*
Just exactly who the hell do you suggest we vote for in November? Do you long for another four years of Republicans and Bush? That is what *The Nation* is going to get by destroying Clinton. He *is* the nominee. What the hell is your alternative? Will you take the hell your thumbs out of your mouths and *think* what you are doing? You are destroying the alternative to Bush. Why? Why? *Dale Mills*

### OLD & CYNICAL?

*Bar Harbor, Me.*
I have read *The Nation* with interest for a few years. I depend on it for news I can't find elsewhere. I am 49, live in the country and have an intentionally simple way of life. I and my husband are self-employed. If we have one complaint about *The Nation*, it is its tendency to be critical of everything. In your report on the French elections [Daniel Singer, "Hate in a Warm Climate," April 20], you did mention that the Green Party and the Ecological Generation received 14 percent of the vote. This was more of a mention than other news sources I read, but even though the Greens' percentage of the vote was equal to Le Pen's, it was not considered enough of a trend to merit further attention. Le Pen and the alarming strength of the neofascists got a whole article. In this you seem not unlike the TV evening news, which seems to play on fears and bad news to capture attention. Isn't this contributing to the bad news?

Isn't it time you gave some attention to the growth of the Green Party in Europe, in the new legitimation of the Green Party in California? I found your treatment of the peace movement during the Gulf War and the general disparaging of anything New Age equally predictable. Are you all too old and too cynical to give idealism a chance?

*Judith Blank*

### I ♥ ROMANCE

*Houston*
Richard Pollak's "Romance Slaves of Harlequin" [March 11] contains absolutely untrue innuendo and information about the board of directors of Romance Writers of America, its relationship with Harlequin Enterprises, its position on behalf of its membership and even the number of members in R.W.A. (currently 5,300). R.W.A. has given the Authors Guild verbal and written support of *all* its work on behalf of genre writers. We *have* communicated with Harlequin regarding our members' concerns and expect to have a meeting in the near future with Harlequin executives to further discuss those concerns. Pollak should have interviewed the Romance Writers of America rather than printing "facts" and "appearances" received second- or third- or fourth-hand.

*Linda Cajio, president*
*Romance Writers of America*

### LOVE FOR HIRE

*University Park, Pa.*
Harlequin's alleged threat to use work-for-hire agreements to further enthrall its authors seems inexcusable. One wonders, however, how Harlequin thinks it can carry out this threat. Nothing in the definition of a work made for hire in the copyright law suggests any way in which a romance novel could be legally construed as falling within that category—unless, that is, Harlequin is prepared to hire all its pseudonymous authors as genuine "employees"! Publishers have had enough difficulty persuading Congress to keep that definition intact for those categories of works for which it is genuinely needed. It doesn't help the industry's credibility to have a publisher like Harlequin make idle threats that play right into the hands of critics who want to do away with the whole category of works made for hire.

*Sanford G. Thatcher, chair*
*Copyright Committee*
*Association of American University Presses*

### POLLAK REPLIES

*New York City*
If membership in Romance Writers of America is, indeed, 1,300 greater than I stated, I'm pleased to have the record set straight. Whatever the total members, they should know that numbers of their colleagues complained angrily to the Authors Guild about the spinelessness of the R.W.A. board in dealing with Harlequin Enterprises on the reversion of rights issue. Linda Cajio did, as she said, write to the guild, but her letter arrived on March 3, four days after my article went to press. Enclosed with it was an earlier letter that the R.W.A. had sent to the guild at the wrong address. Both letters expressed vague support for the guild's work but neither mentioned Harlequin or its efforts to gain control of its authors' pseudonyms. Cajio now says she is sorry for any misunderstanding between the board and the membership and that the R.W.A. has invited Harlequin officials to come to its annual board meeting in Chicago in July to discuss the pseudonym policy and reversion of rights. She told me the board's position now is that granting those rights is a contractual obligation that Harlequin and all other publishers should honor. Progress. *Richard Pollak*

### WARPED

*New York City*
We were baffled by Cynthia Cotts's article on the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, "Hard Sell in the Drug War" [March 9]. Aside from the sweeping generalizations, factual inaccuracies and quotes used out of context, the article's main premise—that the Partnership is a "silent partner to the drug industry, condoning the use of 'good' drugs by targeting only the 'bad' ones"—is astounding. The Partnership is a nonprofit coalition of professionals from the communications industry dedicated to reducing demand for illicit drugs. Hundreds of professionals from advertising, production, talent unions, research groups and the media donate time, talent and resources to this effort.

We do not "overlook" the dangers of tobacco, alcohol and pills, nor do we condone the use of these substances as described in Cotts's warped conspiracy theories. We choose to focus solely on illicit drugs for many reasons (*focus* being the most important factor). To suggest that funding from the producers of alcohol, tobacco and pharmaceuticals keeps the Partnership away from "legal drugs" is outrageous, irresponsible and absolutely wrong. For the record, no donor or funding source of the Partnership has any influence over our strategic direction, programs and/or campaigns. That is the responsibility of the Partnership and the people who've built this organization into what has become the largest public service media campaign in history. No contributor, large or small, has the effect Cotts suggests, including the manufacturers of "legal drugs," whose contributions to the Partnership total 3 percent of our operating budget. *Thomas A. Hedrick, president*
*Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

(*Continued on Page 800*)

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# EDITORIALS.

## Budget Baloney

Only a Congress empty of ideas, fearful of the voters and desperate for re-election could come up with a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, which is now all the rage in Washington and which is likely to be passed, in some form or other, before the Fourth of July. In Senator Paul Simon's version, the President would have to submit a balanced budget to Congress every year, and Congress would be obliged to pass its own balanced budget in turn (the two documents need not have the same components), unless 60 percent of that august body voted to override. Not only that, but the amendment proposals all seek to steer the balancing act in the direction of spending cuts rather than tax hikes—even progressive tax hikes.

A surprisingly broad coalition of liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans say they'll vote for the amendment, but it is the Democrats who are the key to its passage. They, at least, ought to know better than the Republicans, but they have copped to a mean and stupid conservatism that they have done nothing to combat. They agree with President Bush that Congress is incapable of acting responsibly, that the deficit is out of control and that only recourse to a higher political power—a sacred text—can save the members from their own weakness.

But what's really going on is that Congress is casting about for a gimmick to disarm the anger of the electorate, who seem inordinately het up about the House banking mess, the legislative gridlock, the corruption of public officials and other pathologies infecting Washington. Hardly anyone except a few old-guard Republicans believes that a balanced budget amendment will ever reduce the deficit, and what with the long ratification procedure in the states, it couldn't possibly

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go into effect until the end of this century, by which time horrors as yet unimagined will surely replace the deficit as something to worry about.

The amendment's essential frivolousness is not its chief defect. If it were only worthless, it would not matter much more than the hundreds of other worthless acts Congress passes every year. But by elevating a balanced budget to constitutional sanctity, it would virtually prohibit the government from doing the really necessary work of reconstructing our failing economic structures. As Jeff Faux of the Economic Policy Institute pointed out, the amendment would make it difficult if not impossible to do anything "really big," such as tackle global warming or make investments in economic infrastructure (education, public works, health, urban redevelopment) on a scale equal to the need. Indeed, the amendment seems to enshrine the deficit as the symbol and substance of what's wrong with the country—America's number-one problem. To see things that way is to insure continued decline.

The deficit is a consequence of deindustrialization, the falling rate of productivity, corporate globalization, intracapitalist competition, regressive taxation, declining public investment, unionbusting and other pernicious practices of the American economy. To be sure, the symptom tends to magnify the malaise, but nothing much will happen to rebuild America if balanced budgets are passed in the absence of more radical remedies. In fact, studies of the balanced budget amendment strongly suggest that the result would be more unemployment, slower growth and less competitiveness—and thus, bigger deficits in the future.

# Father Knew Best

Dan Quayle blames the Los Angeles riot and related disasters on *Murphy Brown*, the CBS hit-com whose title character, a TV news anchor played by Candice Bergen, "[mocks] the importance of fathers by bearing a child alone and calling it just another 'life style choice.' " Quayle's proclamation is just the latest in a series of telebashings by the White House. *Sesame Street* and indeed the entire PBS lineup, as well as shows like *The Simpsons*, have come under fire for promoting bad attitudes. President Bush himself has said that Americans should be more like the Waltons and less like the Simpsons.

But have Bush and Quayle gone far enough? Are they missing *Cheers*, for instance, which fosters alcoholism? Or *Major Dad*, which brings the U.S. military into disrepute? *Northern Exposure*'s season-ender recently disclosed that the Alaskan town where the show is set was founded by a couple of lesbians. *L.A. Law* has a resident bisexual, *Doogie Howser* shamelessly exploits child labor, *Quantum Leap* features a man who steadfastly refuses to commit over several centuries and *Jake and the Fatman* (in reruns) is now in clear violation of the new federal food pyramid guidelines, thus encouraging an obese and unproductive national work force. Anything on Fox is suspect, from the post-patriarchal *Married . . . With Children* to the hip-hop-national *In Living Color*. *This Old House* discourages new housing starts when the construction industry is in dire straits. *Family Feud* by definition celebrates and rewards dysfunctional families who fight over prizes. *Thirtysomething* made a virtue of sitting around complaining and living beyond one's means. And studies showed that the recently departed Johnny Carson contributed to insomnia, diminished sexual function and a profound *Weltschmerz* that will ultimately propel H. Ross Perot into the Oval Office.

Details at eleven.

# Vile Bodies

In the late 1970s, when Robert Mapplethorpe was producing the photographs that would make his name famous, he had no expectation that even advanced commercial galleries would be interested in exhibiting the work. It was instead shown in various spaces supported without controversy by the National Endowment for the Arts during those years. Mapplethorpe and other artists took it for granted that it was the N.E.A.'s role to support art regarded as too difficult for the private sector, just as it is the government's role to support scientific projects that, for whatever reason, cannot be undertaken by the private sector.

There are a great many art projects, by no means all of them explicitly erotic, that have no commercial potential whatever. Artists spontaneously turn to the N.E.A. to subsidize what cannot easily be thought of as marketable. None of this can be art of what one might term the lowest common denominator, which is evidently what Anne-Imelda Radice, the acting chairwoman of the endowment, had in mind recently when, rejecting two projects unanimously recommended by her panels, she said it was not art that has "the widest audience." Indeed, a lot of the art the N.E.A. sustains will have a very narrow audience. The argument against Radice must be that support of such art benefits the entire population, just as it benefits humanity at large that science be subsidized that has no immediate or direct commercial application. People generally accept the premise that the nation benefits from the support of art for which most of the electorate will not be part of the audience. The jurors in Cincinnati accepted this principle in acquitting gallery director Dennis Barrie for showing Mapplethorpe's work, although they did not constitute part of the audience for the work.

In truth, Radice's criterion of art that fails her surprisingly populist standard is conspicuously clear: It is art that includes representations of body parts. In this she demonstrates her oneness with the endowment, which has shown a continuing hysteria in confronting representations of the body's parts, fluids and products. And it is worth speculating on why such art might have a social benefit even if it falls outside the taste of the "widest audience." It is not a mere matter of freedom. Rather, it has to do with the fact, much remarked on these days, that it is rare to talk to doctors with one's clothes on. Can it be that the body parts in question are not so much eroticized as medicalized? And in consequence they have become associated with sickness rather than with pleasure? It may be of the greatest social benefit to fight against the medical

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segregation of the body by claiming the body's parts for art and human meaning. In any case, society does not benefit when art's main funding agency collaborates in making the body unmentionable, mechanical, pathological and distant.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

# Toxic Military

Because of U.S. opposition the government officials assembled in June in Rio de Janeiro for the Earth Summit will not consider the environmental degradation caused by the world's military establishments. They ought to. As a report by a Canadian research institute makes clear, the world's armed forces are the single biggest polluters on the planet. According to the report, prepared by researchers of the Science for Peace institute at the University of Toronto, "10 to 30 percent of all global environmental degradation can be attributed to military activities." The military establishments also use up tremendous amounts of environmental and human resources and deplete massive amounts of energy.

The Pentagon, for instance, is the largest consumer of oil in the United States. The 200 billion barrels it purchased in 1989 could run all U.S. public transit systems for twenty-two years. In less than an hour an F-16 jet fighter consumes almost twice as much gas as the average American motorist does in a year. Approximately one-quarter of the world's jet fuel is used by armed forces. And worldwide military consumption of aluminum, copper, nickel and platinum exceeds that of the entire Third World.

The world's armed forces also control and use huge amounts of land. In the United States, the equivalent of the entire state of Virginia is given over to military use. In 1991, the Soviet military apparatus controlled twice this area in Kazakhstan alone. But as the Canadian report states, "the military destroys large tracts of the land it is supposed to protect. . . . Recovery from the effects of some military activities may take thousands of years." The U.S. Army closed its polluted Jefferson Proving Ground in Indiana because a cleanup is considered too dangerous and expensive.

Military activities have also significantly increased such problems as air pollution and ozone depletion. West Germany's Air Force, for instance, was responsible for 58 percent of the air pollutants generated by all air traffic in the country's air space. Low-level flights by military aircraft disrupt wildlife migration and behavior patterns and harm human health. In Canada and the United States, native communities are most seriously affected by these flights. According to a German estimate, 6 to 10 percent of global air pollution is linked to the military. The world's armed forces are responsible for more than two-thirds of the ozone-depleting CFC-113 released into the atmosphere.

The Canadian report documents the worldwide devastation caused by hazardous wastes generated by the military. "Globally, the U.S. and Soviet armed forces produce the greatest amounts of hazardous waste," the report states. The Pentagon, for instance, generates more than five times the toxic waste produced by all five major U.S. chemical corporations combined. And in the former Soviet Union, so much nuclear waste was dumped into Lake Karachay that it had to be covered with a layer of concrete. Soviet forces have ravaged Eastern Europe, where in some areas groundwater is contaminated at thirty to fifty times allowable levels. Ten percent of the former East Germany has been polluted or despoiled by the military. The U.S. military has left behind a similar legacy in Germany and the Third World.

Radioactive fallout from nuclear testing may have caused as many as 86,000 birth defects and 150,000 premature deaths worldwide, according to a Worldwatch Institute report. International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War estimates that the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons will cause 2.4 million cancer deaths. And as a result of nuclear accidents, William Arkin and Joshua Handler reported in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in 1989, at least fifty nuclear warheads and eleven nuclear reactors lie on the ocean floor, poisoning marine fauna and flora.

The report also states, "The environmental costs of militarism are compounded by the lost opportunities resulting from the annual diversion of almost $1 trillion in global resources for military purposes." Eight percent of global military expenditures would suffice to pay for safe water supply and sewage treatment programs, the reversal of desertification and tropical deforestation, and population control worldwide. "If we neglect the military system when discussing the future of our planet," said Science for Peace president David Parnas, "we will be ignoring some of the greatest sources of environmental damage and overlooking some of the least disruptive corrective measures available to us."

RETO PIETH

*Reto Pieth is a Swiss journalist based in Vermont.*

**NEXT WEEK**

Robert Scheer on California politics

Ronnie Dugger and Robert Fitch on Ross Perot

★

## A California Poll

*It seems that Ross Perot's ahead*
*In California's latest tally.*
*Republicans take heart: It's clear*
*Bush has the votes of Simi Valley.*

*Calvin Trillin*

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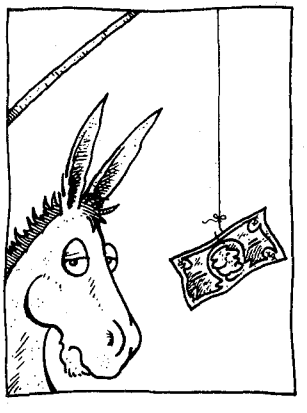
# MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

*St. Petersburg, Florida*

Is there anything that Bill Clinton will not do? A few weeks ago, on April 23 to be precise, he came to Florida and, in return for a check for $75,000, attacked George Bush from the right. At a rally of Cuban exiles held at Victor's Cafe in Miami's Little Havana, he publicly endorsed the bill that calls itself the Cuban Democracy Act. Named for its sponsors—Representatives Robert Torricelli and Bob Graham—this legislation mandates the punishment of third countries and U.S. corporate subsidiaries that do business with Cuba. It is opposed by the White House because, among other things, it violates the free trade agreements with Canada and Britain.

"I think this Administration has missed a big opportunity," Clinton said, "to put the hammer down on Fidel Castro and Cuba." Before anyone had time to think what that opportunity might have been, he added, "I have read the Torricelli-Graham bill, and I like it." Not since Kennedy—Clinton's ostensible role model—ran against Nixon and Eisenhower from the right on the Cuba question has any Democrat given such a hostage to fortune. Election-year promises to Cuban ultras in Miami have a way of coming back to haunt those who make them. Not that Clinton as President would be able to stage his own Bay of Pigs. But it's worth being reminded that he's even now advertising his willingness to do so if called upon.



Since nobody but a fool imagines that the Miami Cubans are going to vote for anyone but Bush and Quayle this year, one has to assume that Clinton made his rash and unprincipled commitment solely for the cash value. This proves, among other things, that he is cheap and small-time, a shakedown artist on an Arkansan scale. Admittedly, and in the irritating phrase of the moment, $75,000 "ain't beanbag." But nor is it very much money in return for committing the Democratic Party to a harder line on Cuba than the Republicans are willing to take.

As everyone in Miami knows, the moral author of the Torricelli-Graham bill is Jorge Mas Canosa, the *caudillo* of the Cuban-American National Foundation. Mas Canosa is not a particularly sentimental or democratic fellow. He has recently added two new members to one of his advisory committees at CANF. They are the brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo, who were cited in the original indictment for the 1976 murder of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier and his assistant Ronni Moffitt. The F.B.I. considers the Novos to be dangerous, for this action and for others. Is this the kind of company that Clinton wishes to keep? Or does the money take care of that concern?

While Clinton talks of bringing the hammer down on Cuba, and while the Castro regime sleepwalks toward an ideological meltdown, and while the right in Miami is sharpening its blades, the American left is apparently content to await developments in a fatalistic manner. One might have thought, given all that Cuba has meant in this century, that we could do better. An increasingly important choice is emerging. For actuarial reasons, let alone political ones, the Castro brothers cannot last much longer. That does not mean that Cuba ought to be abandoned to the Miami variety of counterrevolution, or allowed simply to lapse into misery, or saved up by some gruesome Republican strategist for a possible Mariel-style provocation sometime around October.

In her excellent new book, *Cubans: Voices of Change*, Lynn Geldof conducts a series of illuminating conversations with Cubans on the island, in Miami and elsewhere, and with those who have made a study of the revolution. No single conclusion or strategy emerges from the book, except on the matter of the embargo. In that case it is very clear that what we need is not a tighter embargo but no embargo at all. Wayne Smith, the former head of mission at the U.S. Interest Section in Havana, puts it well when he tells Geldof:

> Cuba has the same effect on American administrations that the full moon has on werewolves: they just lose their rationality at the mention of Castro or Cuba.

There used to be, Smith reminds us, three Administration conditions for "normalizing" or "thawing" relations with Havana. Cuban soldiers had to begin to leave Africa, political prisoners had to be released and there had to be a reduction in Soviet-Cuban ties. Well, the Cubans have indeed left Angola (having earned warm thanks for defeating the South Africans at the battle of Cuíto Cuanavale and thus speeding the liberation of the region from apartheid). The number of long-term political prisoners is now in the single figures. And there is only the most notional sense of "Soviet-Cuban" relations. But the response of Bush and Baker is still No dice. They and their class cannot forgive the impudence of the Cubans in expropriating American property and in outliving imperial warnings to cease and desist. This leaves millions of Cubans, including many of those interviewed by Geldof, stuck between the vindictiveness of Washington and the increasingly theatrical dogmatism of the autumnal patriarch himself.

Until now, Mas Canosa and the thuggish periphery of his organization have been able to repress dissent among Cuban-Americans, many of whom tell the opinion pollsters that they favor freedom of travel between Cuba and the United States, cultural exchanges, mail and phone service and other obvious and humane improvements. Against this must be set the domination of a faction, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, that directly brought us the Bay of Pigs, indirectly brought us the Cuban missile crisis, twenty years ago gave us the Watergate burglars and has consistently supplied fanatics and hysterics to the national security state. This faction has now bought, with contemptuous ease, the Democratic nominee. A fine day's work.

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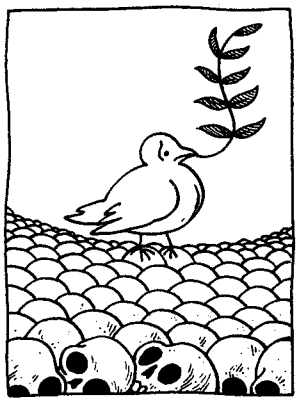
# WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

Although I was never in Phnom Penh before Cambodia was first ravaged by Henry Kissinger, Pol Pot and their friends and then required to become a "people's democracy," a visit for Asia Watch in April made it easy to see why the city was once favored by Western journalists, relief workers and others on R&R from Vietnam. The Cambodian capital is a city of pleasant mien with broad tree-shaded avenues and a rich architectural legacy: the royal palace, Buddhist temples, stupas and many fine old colonial houses. Some of the latter are being restored to accommodate the horde of international agencies setting up shop to take part in the peace and refugee repatriation process that is to lead to elections a year from now, supervised by the United Nations. As a consequence, commerce is thriving. An American accounting firm's arrival is heralded by a banner in front of its villa: Ernst & Young, First Again. Parked in front of the Cambodiana—a large, fully occupied luxury hotel that looks like a cross betwen a pagoda and a Howard Johnson's—I saw a Mercedes decorated with gold-plated grille and hood ornament.

Cambodia is the most striking example of the U.N.'s new interventionist role in ending the fighting as well as holding elections and promoting human rights in states torn apart by civil war. Under the agreement signed in Paris on October 23, 1991, by the State of Cambodia and the three military factions combating it, including the Khmer Rouge, a United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) has been established under the direction of a senior U.N. diplomat, Yasushi Akashi of Japan. His powers suggest those of an imperial viceroy: He can set aside laws, remove officials and deploy troops; his responsibilities include the repatriation and resettlement of 375,000 refugees living in border camps and the demobilization and disarmament of 70 percent of the 200,000 troops (from all combatant forces) and a comparable number of militiamen. The difficulty of coping with such large numbers of people is exacerbated by the extent of internal displacement—the uprooting of another 170,000 or so Cambodians from their homes, mostly in the countryside—caused by fighting over the past few years. Akashi is also charged with drafting the law under which free and fair national elections, the first in Cambodia's history, are to take place by May 1993.



UNTAC's mission will cost some $2 billion, an enormous sum for the U.N. to raise but a bargain given the magnitude of the task. Although the U.N. has made mistakes in Cambodia and some fear that war could break out again, I came away with the impression that much is being done well and that there is a chance of success.

The U.N. originally miscalculated about arrangements for the repatriation of refugees. It announced that every refugee family would receive two hectares (about five acres) of land—an unrealistic plan, since much of the Cambodian countryside is unusable because of the hundreds of thousands of land mines laid by all the combatant forces. Also, no mines were removed before repatriation began. Fortunately, the colonel from New Zealand now in charge of de-mining for UNTAC seems to be on the right track. He has started training demobilized Cambodian soldiers, enlisting the skills they acquired while planting mines and providing a substitute for the income lost to them when they left the military. The 5,000 individuals he proposes to train should be at the task for years. If they had started six months earlier, right after the peace agreement was signed, there would be more land available now to resettle refugees. (Following my return from Phnom Penh, Reuters reported that de-mining had come to a halt because the Cambodian Ministry of Defense was attempting to get a large cut of UNTAC's budget for hiring demobilized soldiers. These are the kinds of things UNTAC must deal with on a daily basis.)

Another early mistake was the U.N.'s assumption that resettled refugees would all take up farming. Yet some of these people were never farmers; others grew to maturity in the camps without ever learning to farm. Late in the day, new plans are being made to repatriate some refugees to urban areas.

As a result of these and other misjudgments, it is likely that not all the refugees will be repatriated in time for next year's elections. The fairness of the electoral process will thus be threatened by factions controlling the camps and intent on intimidation, as well as by violent attacks of uncertain provenance on political activists. One former government official, Ung Phan, narrowly survived an assassination attempt after he announced the formation of a new political party. An associate, Yang Horn, was killed in March while walking on a crowded street, either because someone on a passing motorbike struck him between the eyes with a heavy object or because the motorbike brushed him by accident and he hit his head as he fell. The latter incident took place just as UNTAC's top investigators were arriving in Phnom Penh. Regrettably, because they were not yet established in the country, they failed to arrange an autopsy. Even the question of whether this was a political murder or an accident remains unresolved. The same is true for other mysterious deaths that occurred before UNTAC personnel arrived.

Despite errors, UNTAC is fortunate in its leadership. Yasushi Akashi is thoughtful, committed and sensitive to the need to exercise his powers sparingly but decisively. Most, though not all, of his top aides also seem up to their tasks. Several have long been devoted to the Cambodian cause and are determined to make the most of the historic opportunity to assist a destroyed nation in reconstituting itself. The urgency of their mission transcends even that noble goal, for if the U.N. can breathe new life into Cambodia, the world will turn to it to do the same for other devastated states. There are many candidates.

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# ARTICLES.

COMING IN FROM THE COLD

# Let's Terminate The C.I.A.

MARCUS RASKIN

The end of the cold war and the collapse of our chief adversary in that conflict challenges the very existence of the national security state, which has dominated American society for almost a half-century. A pillar of that apparatus is the nation's intelligence community—the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and related agencies.* With an annual secret budget estimated at between $30 billion and $40 billion, these agencies, led by the C.I.A., have been in the forefront of the "secret war" for forty-five years. Aside from rare official inquiries such as the Church committee's investigations in 1975 and periodic exposés in the media, they have operated virtually exempt from public scrutiny. Only when the not uncommon disaster—such as Iran/*contra*—breaks into the headlines do Americans get a glimmer of what is being done in their name by the secret services.

Now that the cold war is over, it's time for a far-reaching public debate on the future role of the intelligence agencies. In my view they should be dismantled or transformed, not merely reorganized. At the confirmation hearings of Robert Gates as Director of Central Intelligence, and in subsequent debates in the Senate, the question of the C.I.A.'s future was raised, but only a few legislators, most notably Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, have challenged its cold war premises or questioned its future usefulness. Rather, the approach has been to try to think up new jobs for the C.I.A. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence entertained such ideas as using the agency to help multinational corporations compete in the global economy or to wage stepped-up antiterrorist campaigns or to collect environmental intelligence.

On February 5, the chairmen of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees, David Boren and Dave McCurdy, respectively, introduced parallel bills on reorganizing the "intelligence community." But these legislative efforts merely sanctify into law the cold war traditions of U.S. intelligence—covert operations, a threat mentality, a presumption for military intervention and the continuing need for the intelligence community. The "new" intelligence community would be led by a Director of National Intelligence, who would serve as the President's chief adviser on intelligence. Under both bills, the organization and decision making remain under the executive branch. As Senator Ernest Hollings said in committee, the intelligence community should maintain the capacity "to keep policymakers abreast of the great variety of threats the nation faces . . . proliferation of high-technology weapons, regional threats, terrorism, drug trafficking, economic and business developments among our trade rivals, and environmental change."

The fact that the senators still think of the intelligence community in terms of the cold war model was obvious in their performance during Gates's confirmation hearings last year. During his career, Gates had been involved in a variety of covert activities, cover-ups and "plausible denials." He claimed that he knew nothing about the Iran/*contra* affair, although he was Deputy Director at the time. As Senator Edward Kennedy, one of the C.I.A.'s few critics, pointed out on the Senate floor, "Mr. Gates's record is one of a cold warrior who skewed intelligence to fit his or his superiors' view of the world. He ignored the biggest scandal of the decade, intimidated those who disagreed with his views, and ignored the crumbling of the Soviet Union long after it began."

The C.I.A.'s failure to predict and analyze the likely consequences of a Soviet collapse was an egregious example of its cold war mindset—its fiercely ideological cast and its belief in the value of stability over change (except when it is doing the destabilizing).

Despite Gates's involvement in these agencywide failings and the testimony of other agency officials that he "cooked" intelligence reports to suit the Reagan Administration, he was confirmed. The Gates hearings produced evidence that the C.I.A.'s activities were often counterproductive, useless or even criminal. Yet most senators professed themselves satisfied by Gates's *mea culpas* and accepted as acts of contrition his pledges never to lie to them, to be more open with the public and to clean up the agency's image.

Last May, seeking to increase Congressional control over the C.I.A., Senator John Glenn introduced a bill requiring that top officials of the agency, in addition to the director, be confirmed by the Senate, but this bill, which was tacked onto the Intelligence Authorization Act of 1991, was voted down by the Senate, 59 to 38. Opponents of Glenn's amendment argued that secrecy and czarlike power for the director were still necessary. The Senate's main concerns were about waste and duplication of effort. By April 1992 the Senate Intelligence Committee returned to its traditional role of covering for the C.I.A., even though the agency lied at least twice to the committee about the transfer of intelligence information to Iraq. After the end of the Gulf War, the C.I.A. told the Intelligence Committee that the agency had stopped giving intelligence to the Iraqis two years before Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. During the Gates nomination hearings the agency changed its tune and said it had ceased cooperating with the Iraqis in early 1990. After the nomination was approved, the C.I.A. said it gave intelligence for another three

* The U.S. "intelligence community" properly includes the intelligence units in each branch of the armed services, as well as those in the State Department, the Energy Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Justice and Treasury Departments and the National Imaging Agency.

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to four months beyond early 1990. Then further information was released that suggested that the agency continued to give information until August 1990. Senator Boren did not seem bothered by these contradictions.

Reform efforts in Congress have been timid and marginal and will remain dormant until another intelligence scandal surfaces. The opportunity to restructure U.S. intelligence for the post–cold war world has been temporarily lost. Nevertheless, transforming the cold war intelligence apparatus should be a topic of public debate for the rest of this century, just as U.S. national defense assumptions must be continually re-examined and revised in the light of realities of the post–cold war world. The debate over American and world security has just begun. The purpose of this symposium is to contribute to that debate by reconsidering the root assumptions and policy alternatives of national security.

In my view, such a reappraisal will show that the cold war mission of the intelligence community has ended and that it should be dismantled, along with the atmosphere of paranoia and conflict that it fed and propagated at home and abroad. The history of U.S. intelligence over the past forty-five years teaches us what needs to be done if it is to serve democratic ends.

## I.

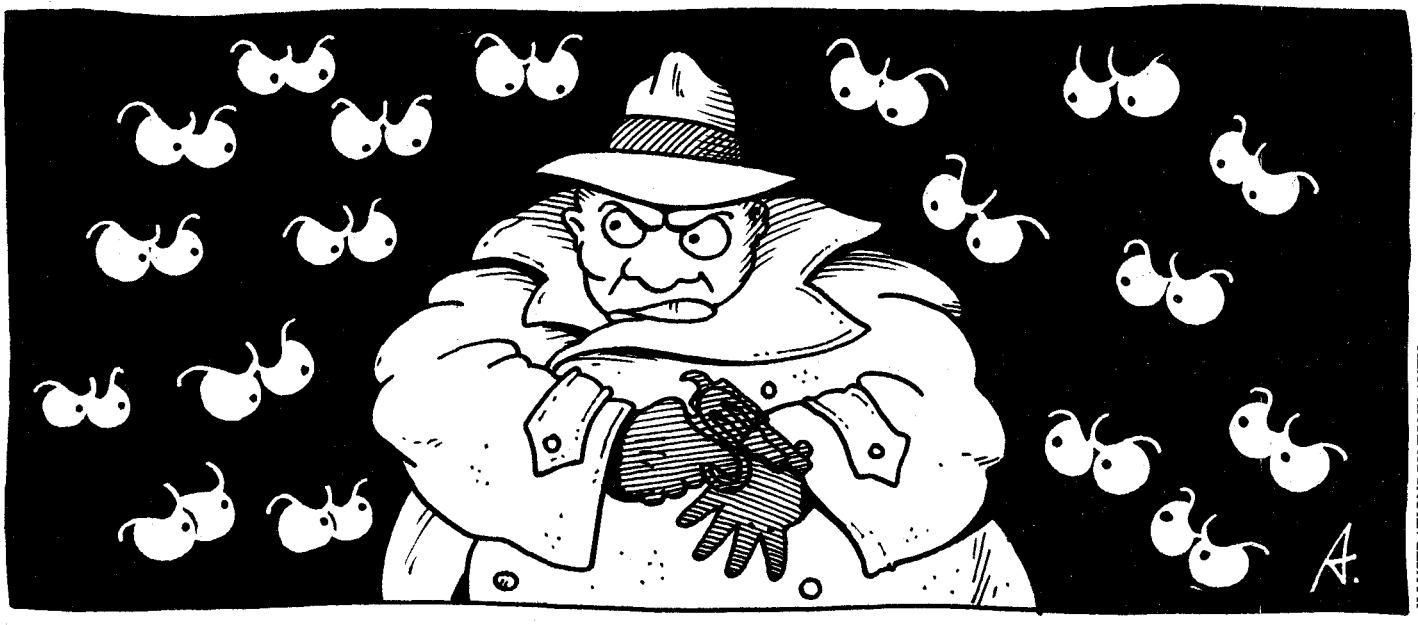
During the cold war years, U.S. intelligence operations were carried out according to a conflict/threat model of international relations. Within that model, American policy-makers assumed that the United States is under continuous siege from enemies real or potential, but mostly conjured. It assumed that America's place in the world is primarily achieved through military and covert means. And it assumed that the United States can never be at peace, that it must always be involved in some kind of military or paramilitary activity that it initiates and controls.

American leaders believed that the state required an extensive covert intelligence operation that would assure the nation's superiority in the conflict with its chief enemy, the Soviet Union. Also needed were internal security controls to insure a compliant citizenry. The role of the intelligence community was to perceive the world through the lens of distrust. Institutionalized paranoia was the prescription for the American people, not only against enemies abroad but against their fellow Americans as well.

In addition to exaggerated fears of Soviet power and intentions, the conflict/threat model presumed a world inhabited by Enemy Others. America's competitive spirit accepted cooperation in military alliances only when the United States was the leading partner. The Soviet Union was portrayed as the archrival, an enduring, pervasive threat that was behind all mischief in the world. To combat it, the United States had to engage in a variety of dirty tricks in the "back alleys" of the world, in Secretary of State Dean Rusk's phrase.

As a recent Pentagon working paper ("Defense Planning Guidance: 1994–1999") indicates, the conflict/threat model is far from dead. Under this Defense Department proposal the United States would preside over a Pax Americana and "discourage" advanced industrial nations from "challenging our leadership," as well as deter "potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger or global role." This country, the Pentagon said, "will retain the preeminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations." Such a policy of world dominance has failure written all over it. As Quincy Wright, a leading international lawyer of the post–World War II era, pointed out, "The effort to achieve ideological and political unification by the French Revolution and Napoleon, by the Fascist revolution and the Axis, and by the Communist revolution and Stalin failed and again indicated that coexistence and co-operation among independent nations is the only basis for peace, order, and justice in the world of varied nationalities and ideologies." This reasoning is especially compelling in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

We tend to forget that there is an alternative to the conflict/threat model—the cooperation model. It calls for international cooperation, with nations working through international

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bodies, adhering to international norms and settling disputes peacefully. The cooperation model gives high priority to finding solutions to the difficult problem of squaring national sovereignty with a code of international human rights, eschewing unilateral intervention and pursuing a comprehensive disarmament program while establishing an international security arrangement through the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations.

During World War II and immediately after, the cooperation model enjoyed a brief ascendancy, reflecting the U.S.-Soviet alliance, the hopes for the newly formed U.N., the people's yearning for peace. But with the defeat of Henry Wallace's Progressive Party in the 1948 election; the death of two-time G.O.P. presidential candidate Wendell L. Willkie, whose internationalist ideas dominated the liberal wing of the Republican Party; the rise of McCarthyism; the victory of the Maoists in China; the economic recession of 1949; and the escalation of border skirmishes between the forces of North and South Korea into full-scale war the following year, the cooperation model died, eclipsed by the cold war. The conflict/threat model dominated government policy and other institutions as well—cultural, educational, economic.

*'We must . . . learn to subvert, sabotage and destroy our enemies.'*

The bureaucratic rationale for the C.I.A. emerged from fears of officials in the Office of Strategic Services (the wartime precursor to the C.I.A.) that the United States was too dependent on British intelligence, that the Soviet Union was seeking control over Eastern Europe and that adequate information was needed to counterbalance Soviet attempts at expansion. According to Anthony Cave Brown in his book *Wild Bill Donovan: The Last Hero*, a paper, "The Basis for a World-Wide Intelligence Service," was prepared by Lieut. Col. Otto Doering for the chief of the O.S.S., Maj. Gen. William Donovan, in 1944. Doering recommended that such an intelligence service be given, among other things, "access to vouchered and unvouchered funds . . . its own communications systems . . . [responsibility] for all secret activity, including secret intelligence, counterespionage, cryptanalysis, and subversive operations." He hoped that it would grow out of the O.S.S. and would be directly responsible to the President. It would not have any police function.

Donovan revised Doering's paper and sent it to President Roosevelt in November 1944. It presented a comprehensive plan for an intelligence service that "would coordinate, collect and produce finished intelligence, its coordination extended to all government intelligence agencies." Collection would include espionage and counterespionage. The proposed service would also conduct extensive subversive operations abroad and "perform such other functions and duties relating to intelligence" as the President might direct. The production of intelligence would relate to "national planning and security in peace and war," and the new service would have access "to the intelligence production of all other services."

The Donovan paper was leaked to *Chicago Tribune* reporter Walter Trohan, an influential conservative journalist of the period. In a story on the Donovan-Doering plan, he charged that it would create a "super-gestapo agency" to spy on the world. The public and Congressional outcry was immediate. Congressional members referred to the proposed agency as the New Deal version of the Soviet O.G.P.U. (the forerunner of the K.G.B.). The leak, which according to Trohan was initiated by Roosevelt through his press secretary, Steve Early, had the effect of sinking Donovan's chances to head the new intelligence agency. Indeed, Congress disbanded the O.S.S., and under the terms of the National Security Act of 1947 set up a new organization to supersede it. The C.I.A. was not much of an improvement over Donovan's model. The major civil liberties safeguard imposed on the C.I.A. was that it was barred from carrying out internal police functions. Those functions were left to the noted civil libertarian J. Edgar Hoover. Soon enough, the C.I.A.—and other intelligence units within the armed forces as well—would compete with the F.B.I. in domestic spying by infiltrating political groups, often for disruptive purposes. The classic cases of such C.I.A. and N.S.A. activities were Operations Chaos and Minaret, which were illegal spying programs against Americans that used warrantless electronic surveillance and human intelligence.

### A Game Without Rules

In 1954, a commission appointed by President Eisenhower and chaired by Lieut. Gen. James Doolittle formulated an official rationale to justify intelligence activities already under way. In a key statement, the commission said: "It is now clear that we are facing an implacable enemy whose avowed objective is world domination by whatever means and at whatever cost. There are no rules in such a game. Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply. If the United States is to survive, long-standing American concepts of 'fair play' must be reconsidered. We must . . . learn to subvert, sabotage and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated and more effective methods than those used against us." It also concluded, "Another important requirement is an aggressive covert psychological, political and paramilitary organization more effective, more unique and, if necessary, more ruthless than that employed by the enemy. No one should be permitted to stand in the way of the prompt, efficient and secure accomplishment of this mission."

Spying was indeed a dirty business. The operations of the C.I.A. and other agencies were often immoral, unconstitutional and criminal. Such activities would have made the public uneasy, so they had to be shrouded by the arts of secrecy and plausible denial. Since the C.I.A. often operated as the President's private army, the executive branch became a kind of front for illegal covert actions. The President gave them a patina of legitimacy, thereby turning the office into a switching point between criminal and lawful activities. Sometimes, of course, Presidents or their subordinates were caught flat-footed participating in criminal activities, as when Howard

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Hunt, a former C.I.A. agent working for the White House, used the agency to help him break into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

Secrecy also served to shield the intelligence establishment (and its hefty budgets) from Congressional and media scrutiny. It insulated the C.I.A. from public examination that might have prevented it from launching disastrous operations like the Bay of Pigs invasion or Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, in which some 20,000 innocent people and suspected Vietcong supporters were murdered. Without outside criticism of its past mistakes, the C.I.A. was doomed to repeat them.

And so for decades it conducted interventions worldwide, subverting governments, arming insurgencies, spreading black propaganda. Often these actions produced harmful consequences. The "victorious coup" in Iran that expelled Mossadegh brought back the Shah, whose misrule paved the way for the Ayatollah Khomeini. The 1954 coup that overthrew Guatemala's democratically elected government produced decades of cruel dictatorship. The glorious putsch that expelled Sukarno in Indonesia brought in its wake the murder or imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians. Back in Washington, the exaggerations of Soviet capabilities and intentions by various elements of the intelligence community fed and sustained the arms race.

### 'Scholars and Spies'

The benign view of itself the C.I.A. projected—as a mere gatherer and dispenser of information to the President from its "campus" at Langley, Virginia, where strolled professorial, pipe-smoking types—was gradually eroded by belated revelations that some of these men had conducted experiments on unwilling subjects with mind-altering drugs, had used germ warfare agents against poor nations and had planned and executed coups.

As the Gates hearings showed, the C.I.A.'s "scholars and spies" were hardly dedicated to independent inquiry. Often their analyses were slanted to pander to the desires of the policy-makers and the predilections of the national security curia. To advance their careers, junior analysts skewed their reports to harmonize with what the "hierarchic other," or superiors in the organization, wanted.

Secrecy invariably assumes a priesthood dealing in fixed truths and essences. It is the antithesis of the spirit of free inquiry exemplified in the teachings of pragmatism, the leading twentieth-century school of social thought. As John Dewey pointed out, "intelligence," in its full meaning as a powerful instrument of social action, can work only as a *public* activity, in settings where judgments and conclusions can be cross-examined and verified through open inquiry and further discourse. "The one fact," he wrote in *Ethics*, "which is most certain is that throughout social life as a whole the older idea and practice which made knowledge a monopolistic possession still persists in a way which prevents the realization and even the fair trial of the democratic ideal. . . . The problem of bringing about an effective socialization of intelligence is probably the greatest problem of democracy today."

A secret bureaucracy, a policy of secrets within secrets, disclosed only to those with "a need to know," by its very nature


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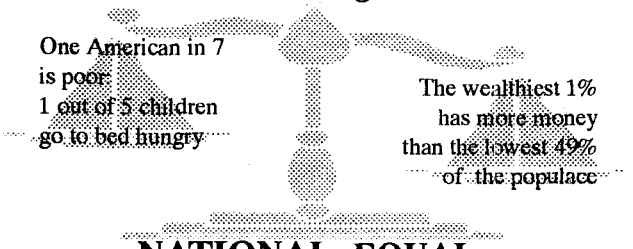


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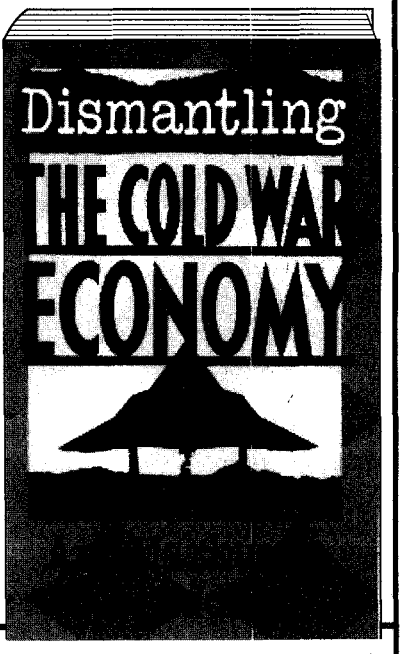


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# Spooks on Campus

When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first space satellite, the United States government concluded we had fallen behind in the development of scientists. The response was the National Defense Education Act, which provided federal money for graduate fellowships in science so that we could catch up in the space race. That was during the cold war, and everything from the building of interstate highways (the National Defense Highway Act) to foreign aid (the Mutual Security Act) was justified by invoking the Soviet threat. Now the obsolescent cold warriors conjure up new enemies and missions to justify their budgets.

One such boondoggle is the National Security Education Act of 1991 (N.S.E.A.). Written and pushed vigorously by Senate Intelligence Committee chairman David Boren, the act gives the directors of the national security system a solid foothold on university campuses and a significant amount of control over their programs of international affairs, language and area studies, and of the students enrolled in them. Justified in the name of a very broad and dubious post-cold war definition of national security, this intrusion raises serious questions for the integrity and independence of the university system. Unfortunately, financially strapped campus administrators and faculties overlook or underplay the dangers of a close working relationship with intelligence and military organizations and applaud the act. The cloak and gown scandals of the Vietnam era appear to have been forgotten, and the very recent revelations of C.I.A. penetration and manipulation of the Rochester Institute of Technology (resulting in the resignation of R.I.T.'s president and his chief administrative assistant) seem not to have reminded them that the leopard still has his spots.

The act declares that "Cold War tensions continue to decline," but "economic competition, regional conflicts, terrorist activities, and weapon proliferations have dramatically increased." From this, it concludes somehow that "the future national security and economic well-being of the United States will substantially depend on the ability of its citizens to communicate and compete by knowing the languages and cultures of other countries." The act appropriates $180 million to establish a National Security Education trust fund, from which $35 million will be spent in 1992, in approximately equal thirds, on undergraduate scholarships for study abroad in "critical countries"; graduate fellowships at U.S. institutions in foreign languages, area studies and other international fields that are determined to be "critical areas"; and grants to universities to establish programs in these "critical areas."

What is disturbing is that the legislation was drafted in the Senate Intelligence Committee, the money comes from the Defense Department and the project is administered by the Defense Intelligence College and overseen by a National Security Education Board, chaired by the Secretary of Defense. An important objective, clearly stated in the legislation, is to provide national security departments and agencies with qualified recruits. Although the act specifies that no intelligence agency may use a student for any purpose while he or she is receiving a grant, fellowship or scholarship, at the same time the Secretary of Defense is empowered to order such students, after graduation, to serve with an intelligence organization, under threat of at least financial penalty. Even more significant for campus independence, the Defense Intelligence College will monitor student progress and can dictate to participating colleges the content and emphasis of their international, language and area studies programs. Universities, under this scheme, merely contract to provide training for the nation's intelligence services.

Since the Defense Department and the C.I.A. already have deservedly renowned language and country study facilities that draw on cooperative and well-qualified academics, this move toward a more direct and controlling presence on campuses is hard to justify in terms of its announced purposes. Certainly, no one should expect much foreign-country cooperation with an international education project labeled "U.S. national security" and directed by the Defense Intelligence College. How do you explain to foreign ministries of education, to universities that in many countries are traditionally anti-establishment, and to student groups frequently suspicious of American motives that they should accept U.S. students who are future C.I.A. officers and who will use their local expertise for covert activities and espionage at some later date? The least those who put N.S.E.A. together can expect is heightened concern and opposition among U.S. campus groups such as C.I.A. Off Campus and Universities in the Public Interest, not to mention adverse reactions on university campuses abroad where student politics are traditionally more violent and consequential than here.

American higher education does need to improve its programs in international affairs and languages, but it could do this on its own simply by restoring foreign language degree requirements, which a shocking number of institutions have dropped in recent years. If federal funding assistance is needed, the appropriate source is the Education Department. If a rationale is required, it should not be some inflated and dubious extension of the concept of "national security" that excuses direction by military officers and secret intelligence officials of what should be the liberating process of university education.

DAVID MACMICHAEL

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engenders paranoia, institutional ignorance and control by a handful of executives, especially in the context of the conflict/threat mindset. The career of James Jesus Angleton, the poet *manqué* and former head of C.I.A. counterintelligence, exemplified this tendency toward paranoia at the highest levels. Angleton apparently concluded that William Colby, a former Director of Central Intelligence and the head of Operation Phoenix, was a mole for the Soviet Union. Angleton's malign suspicions, fed by a Soviet defector, rocked the agency for more than a decade.

*No area of the world was immune from intervention by the C.I.A. and other agencies.*

Angleton's case is perhaps extreme. In the closed society of the intelligence community, what the analyst concludes may be distorted by institutional pressures and a deep-seated policy that goes unquestioned but that distorts analysts' structuring of the data. In an intelligence agency millions of pieces of data are processed daily. As in any scientific inquiry, this flux must be arranged into some order, and the task of the analyst is to make an existential judgment of what he or she believes to be true or authentic. But what is found to be authentic in the closed society of intelligence may derive from a desire or a vested interest simply to please the boss. Undeniably, these factors are at work in other, nonsecret agencies of government. But there is an important difference: "Open" governmental agencies operate with some degree of accountability to Congress, the courts and, through the media, the public.

**Covert Wars**

But intelligence collection and analysis sometimes seemed the least of the C.I.A.'s purposes. The agency has generally been more interested in carrying out direct paramilitary interventions with the sanction of Congress or the President or, sometimes, on its own motion. In September 1970 President Nixon ordered C.I.A. Director Richard Helms to take measures to make the Chilean economy "scream" in order to destabilize the government of socialist President Salvador Allende. Assassination attempts were made against unwanted foreign leaders, usually leftists like Patrice Lumumba in the Congo. Cuba's Fidel Castro has been a favorite bête noire since the Eisenhower Administration. But rightists were not immune. In the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo, a right-wing dictator who had lost the confidence of Washington, was assassinated in 1961. C.I.A. "assets" who became leaders of their country and showed some independence, like Panama's Manuel Noriega, were cut down to size. Under the Reagan Administration C.I.A.-backed surrogates, or "freedom fighters," waged wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and Chad. Covert support to diverse elements in Eastern Europe was stepped up, sometimes with the help of Pope John Paul II.

C.I.A. Director William Casey served as the field marshal of a worldwide system of covert wars. No area of the world was immune from intervention by the C.I.A., N.S.A. and other agencies. All of these escapades flowed from what Frank Wisner, former Deputy Director of the C.I.A., once called "the mighty Wurlitzer"—the ten aspects of intelligence work. Each activity is inextricably linked to the others; like an onion, peel away one layer and you reach another, more dangerous layer. The ten are:

1. The gathering of information by overt or covert means (if the information is gathered by covert means, then as likely as not, another nation's laws are violated).

2. Evaluating, analyzing and storing information; finding assets (covert sources) and establishing proprietaries (dummy companies) to undertake specific tasks.

3. Advising and disseminating information that is often false and self-deceiving; getting U.S. government consumers to use the information, developing a market for it and fashioning information and facts that are custom-made for particular clients in the government. The market may want truthful information or lies.

4. Persuading government consumers to use information they may not ordinarily be interested in (an organization dependent on the whim of a President must provide him with what he wants, but he may bore easily, and so irrelevant or tabloidlike information has to be generated to keep presidential interest).

5. Organizing more covert activities to obtain information, verify conclusions and answer new requests of policy-makers. This is accomplished by expanding the asset and informant network within the United States and abroad; reading intelligence material from other nations and other agencies within the government or from corporations; finding, then relying on, more intelligence material that is gathered secretly or through technical means; bribing and paying assets who are members of other governments.

6. Organizing clandestine activities to obtain classified information of other nations as well as undertaking disinformation campaigns in which material is manufactured to promote either the position of the C.I.A., the official policies of the United States, the agendas of specific groups within the intelligence community or policies that are contrary to those stated to Congress or that violate American law (it should be noted that such disinformation has often found itself blown back into the United States, where it was used to whip up political support for positions that had no factual predicate).

7. Organizing black operations of a complex nature such as economic and political destabilization, mining harbors, funding third-party nations to do the bidding of the United States (as in the case of Israel) as well as receiving and organizing proxy funds.

8. Employing scientific and technological means to undercut the development or abort or inhibit the activities of an adversary nation; developing technical intelligence capacity, cryptography and topographic analysis through satellites.

9. Recruiting local armies and guerrilla groups and developing and guiding them so they can be used for the national objectives of the United States. Covertly sponsoring labor unions,

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women's groups and paying for crowds and demonstrators.

10. Using force—assassination teams when necessary—to assert the considered (or ill-considered) policy. Fighting small wars that are kept out of the U.S. media. Shielding the President by offering plausible denial and cover for illegal and criminal actions he ordered.

These activities form the foundation stones of the intelligence community. The entire project of this community helped to make the government of the United States into an Orwellian nightmare, in which "intelligence" became synonymous with massive self-deception and treachery. Force and fraud had found a home base in the intelligence community and in the cold war conception of intelligence.

## II.

The United States is now at a turning point: It must decide what sort of nation it wants to be. The future role of the intelligence community will have a direct bearing on the character of our nation, for the intelligence community helps determine the policy-makers' perception of the world. It can sustain myths, generate and authenticate "threats," and give the color of rationality to force and fraud.

*Intelligence should be used as a bridge among nations, not as a tool for power and control.*

The struggles now smoldering in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the clan animosities raging from Angola to Croatia, the endemic tensions in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world provide plenty of potential stages for future intelligence actions should we decide to continue playing the dirty game of back-alley wars.

But there is an alternative: adopting the cooperation model. This would mean dismantling the present intelligence community, abandoning those functions that served the cold war state and reassigning to other agencies the functions that can be integrated into the cooperation model of international relations. In this scheme, intelligence analysis would be used as a communications bridge among nations rather than as a tool for power and control.

The cooperation model would be based on the premise that the problems of our world at the close of the twentieth century cannot be resolved by a single nation, the United States, pursuing its own ends. The environment, immigration, disarmament, economic justice and health, as well as the need for mediating regional and international disputes, are matters of world concern requiring the public exchange of ideas and information among a wide array of very different national cultures. A shift away from the conflict/threat paradigm, which means demilitarization and the shifting of budget expenditures away from militarized national security policies, would free badly needed resources to deal with this country's pressing domestic problems.

The United States is in the best position to lead the shift to the cooperation model because its military security problems can be dealt with through a worldwide general disarmament process in tandem with the strengthening of U.N. peacekeeping functions.

Under the cooperation model, intelligence would of course cease to be a clandestine enterprise. Instead it would operate as an international social project, in tandem with a new foreign policy agenda dedicated to environmental protection, scientific understanding, improved communications and information dispersal, worldwide economic development, health improvement and military disarmament.

### Steps to an Open Society

What changes should be made in the intelligence community so that it could serve a nation that acts within the cooperation model of international politics? I would propose the following steps:

*Step One.* There should be a comprehensive revision of the National Security Act of 1947 to insure that the United States pursues policies of cooperation with the U.N. and respect for international law and human rights. The act's purpose, to "provide a comprehensive program for the future security of the United States," cannot be achieved under its current philosophy of militarization of governmental thought, command and organization, and of the employment of resources for war and conflict. The language of a revised National Security Act would emphasize global disarmament, stimulation of international communication, reinvestment in the U.S. infrastructure, preservation of the environment, protection of human rights and cooperation on common problems among nations in the post-cold war world. Intelligence activities would be harnessed to achieving those ends.

*Step Two.* There should be a review of all laws and executive orders that give the intelligence community special status. The most relevant examples are laws that exempt various agencies from systematic review of their operations, from the federal pay scale and from federal labor-management relations statutes. We should also abolish the law exempting the C.I.A. retirement system from public scrutiny and the C.I.A., N.S.A., Defense Intelligence Agency and certain other intelligence units from public financial disclosure requirements.

Several other cold war laws should be repealed or revised, including those making intelligence agencies only vaguely accountable for how they spend their money. There are also statutes that protect members of the C.I.A. from false identification laws, computer fraud statutes, as well as those that allow interference with satellite transmissions. These laws violate the elementary principles of openness, democracy and cooperation that are necessary to international cooperation in the post-cold war world.

*Step Three.* The C.I.A.'s analytic functions should be transferred to noncovert agencies of government. This would affect some nongovernmental sectors of society as well—the universities, international corporations, labor unions and media that have maintained a symbiotic relationship with the national security state, including the intelligence agencies, since World War II.

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The idea that knowledge and information know no boundaries, which dominated the scientific community before World War II, should be revived. The data-collection and analysis functions of the C.I.A. and N.S.A. should be internationalized much in the manner that medical information is now exchanged internationally and publicly. The information could be made available as part of an international information agency that would establish regional centers. The United States, with the assent of the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly, could form a worldwide consortium of intelligence agencies, served by a worldwide community of scholars and analysts whose researches would be made public and distributed widely through regional centers. It would be understood that this consortium would operate under the U.N. Just as no nation can afford not to trade internationally, so no nation or society can afford not to share information for the common good.

The specific areas on which this consortium would concentrate are scientific and data gathering and dissemination; economic justice reporting; conflict resolution/environmental enhancement; the state of human rights; and the state of international agreements, especially in the disarmament area.

*Step Four.* The paramilitary functions that the C.I.A. performed during the cold war should be placed under the control of the uniformed military services, where they would be subjected to public scrutiny and civilian control. The War Powers Act and Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, which gives Congress the power to declare war, govern the President's use of military power except when the United States is attacked. C.I.A. covert actions under the military would be publicly accountable. To underscore this point, the laws on mercenaries should be amended so that they apply directly to government officials or their agents. These sections of the law now make it a crime for individuals to conspire on U.S. soil to destroy the property of or to organize a military expedition against a nation with which the United States is at peace. But penalties are relatively light, no more than three years in prison and/or a $5,000 fine. They should be substantially increased. Throughout the cold war, covert activities, many of them unauthorized, took place under the color of bureaucratic legality. In the future, rogue operators or those who otherwise transgress legal authority would be subject to criminal prosecution.

In other words, military interventions, economic destabilization and other covert actions would be deemed criminal offenses. A President who sought to avoid the constitutional constraints by running a secret war or intervention would face impeachment. It should be noted that when the House Judiciary Committee drew up impeachment charges against President Nixon it did not include the invasion and bombing of Cambodia, a nation with which the United States was at peace. The ostensible reason for the committee's failure to act was that U.S. troops in Vietnam were threatened by North Vietnamese forces thought to be in Cambodia.

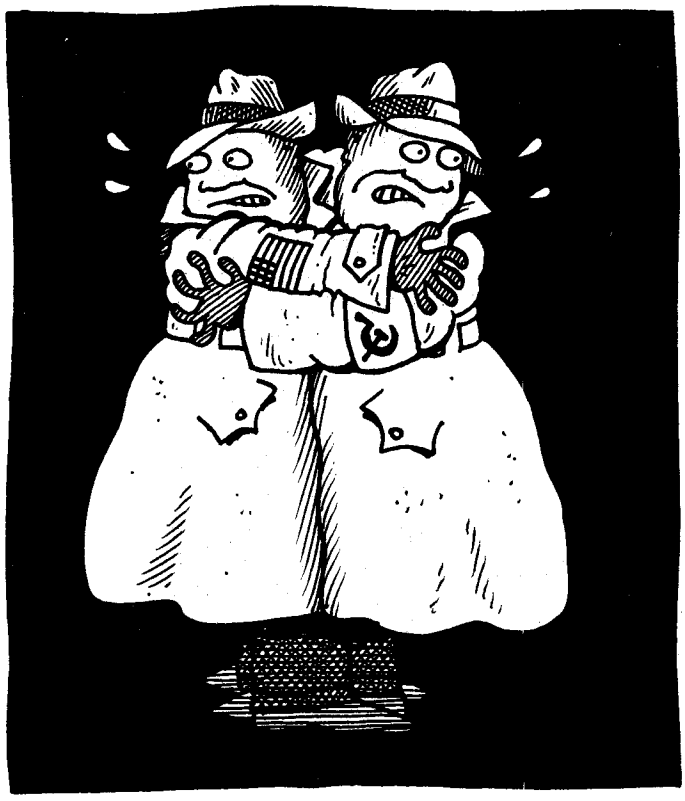
*Step Five.* The Secretary of State should set forth a needs and requirements report to Congress in order to improve the political reporting of the State Department. The secretary would make clear that the department will absorb analysts from the C.I.A., but that it will not countenance being used as a cover for covert and clandestine activities.

*Step Six.* A Protection of Records Act should be crafted to insure that no records of the C.I.A. or other intelligence agencies are destroyed. In this way a true account of the history of the cold war period could be written. These records should be made public as quickly as possible after being transferred to the Archivist of the United States. Substantial penalties should apply to those government officials who attempt to forge or rewrite the record.

*Step Seven.* Except for that part of the National Security Agency that would be given over to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and, for specific and narrowly defined purposes, the Defense Department, the N.S.A. would become an international public library under the control of the Librarian of Congress and secondarily the Archivist of the United States.

Any residual activities of the N.S.A. should be subjected to rigorous public scrutiny by Congress in order to assure that its information be made publicly available, and to assure that its various activities are in fact constitutionally sanctioned. (For example, monitoring telephone calls is an invasion of privacy when those on the phone are not informed and have not given their permission.)

The use of technical intelligence to assure compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements should be strengthened. The N.S.A. could link up with similar agencies throughout the world for the specific purpose of observing military maneuvers and the production and shipment of arms, as well as adhering to the disarmament process. All activities having to do with monitoring arms control and disarmament arrangements could be supervised by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and could be publicly conducted, with the N.S.A. serving as the technical arm.



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*Step Eight.* Throughout the cold war, security procedures and surveillance of government officials have been used as an *in terrorem* policy to protect secrets and enforce loyalty. These secrets, as often as not, have reflected two types of material. The first broad category is related to technical scientific matters and military plans. The second is related to operations that were in violation of American law or the law of other nations and international law. Security procedures that in fact have been thinly veiled cover-up schemes (for example, Iran/*contra*) should now be forbidden by executive order.

Matters that pertain to the defense of the United States would continue to be secret. Such secrecy is warranted so long as classification is carried out by the Defense Department as part of its constitutional mandate and pertains to defensive measures permitted by the U.N. Charter, international law and the laws of the United States. However, the entire system of classifying documents would require comprehensive revision so that it would conform to the revised National Security Act described in Step One.

*Step Nine.* Under Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution, "each House may determine the rules of its proceedings" and "each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy." This section would appear to give ample support to the idea of secret hearings (executive session). However, during the cold war this rule of prudence of the Constitution was severely abused. Secrecy was used as a way of co-opting various members of Congress and committees into intelligence activities that would ordinarily be subject to legal challenge, criticism and debate.

The end of the cold war is the right time to restore a rule that is clearly contemplated by the Constitution, namely, that secrecy in government is the exception and not the normal way of doing business. Congress itself should now revise its own organizational structure on national security matters. It should re-examine its own assumptions regarding secrecy and the harm caused by its failure to be an independent and disinterested public guardian over the intelligence agencies. House Rule XLVIII, which governs the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, begins from the assumption of secrecy and nondisclosure of information. Senate Resolution 400, which established its Select Committee on Intelligence, also assumes that its work is primarily secret. The irony is that concern about leaks by Congressional members is greater than concern about the actual practices of the intelligence agencies.

The United States is a protean organism; it can change its shape and purpose. And it can assist in giving birth to a cooperative world civilization that recognizes the importance of cultures and nations outside Europe. If American leaders attempt to control a messy, recalcitrant reality through military and covert means, if the nation does not take stock of itself and initiate its own internal reconstruction, then we will indeed live a nightmare of decline and continuous war, with the covert agencies leading the way. We will mistake paranoia for intelligence, and American leaders will be seeking new Enemy Others to justify the national security state. Without substantial changes in attitudes and direction, the intelligence community will be a willing accomplice, supplying or inventing new threats to an insecure leadership and nation. This year the threat could be the Japanese and next year the Germans, or perhaps it is Iraq or Iran or Libya, or Croatians, North Koreans, African-Americans or immigrants, that justify covert operations.

It is time for the executive and Congress to come in from the cold. It is time for knowledge workers inside and outside governments to work together and fashion a world cooperation model that could help humanity transcend the horrible follies of the twentieth century. □

# Comments

*To the writers below we put the following questions: "Should this country's intelligence services be abolished? If so, why? If not, what reforms or modifications in the present system would you favor?" —The Editors*

## GORE VIDAL

Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution requires government agencies to submit their budgets at regular intervals to Congress for review. Neither the C.I.A. nor the D.I.A. does this. Occasionally, at the dark of the moon, they will send someone up to the Hill to mis- and disinform Congress, and that's that. After all, to explain what they actually do with the money that they get would be a breach of national security, the overall rubric that protects so many of them from criminal indictments. Although most Americans now think that the C.I.A. was created at Valley Forge by General Washington, this unaccountable spy service was invented less than half a century ago, and since that time we have been systematically misinformed about the rest of the world for domestic policy reasons (remember Russia's outstanding economic surge in the 1970s?). Intelligence is an empty concept unless directly related to action. In a war, knowledge of the enemy's troop movements is all-important. In peacetime, random intelligence gathering is meaningless, when not sinister.

Since our rulers have figured that one out, they have done their best to make sure that we shall never be at peace; hence, the necessity of tracking enemies—mostly imaginary ones, as the Pentagon recently revealed in its wonderfully wild scenarios for future wars. Since Communism's ultimate crime against humanity was to go out of business, we now have no universal war to conduct except the one against drugs (more than $20 billion was wasted last year on this crusade). As there is now no longer sufficient money for any of these "wars," there is no longer a rationale for so many secret services unless the Feds really come out of the closet and declare war on the American people, the ultimate solution: After all, one contingency plan in Ollie North's notebook suggested that in a time of crisis, dusky-hued Americans should be sequestered.

I would suggest that the State Department return to its once-

*Gore Vidal is co-starring with Tim Robbins in* Bob Roberts, *to be released this fall before the elections.*

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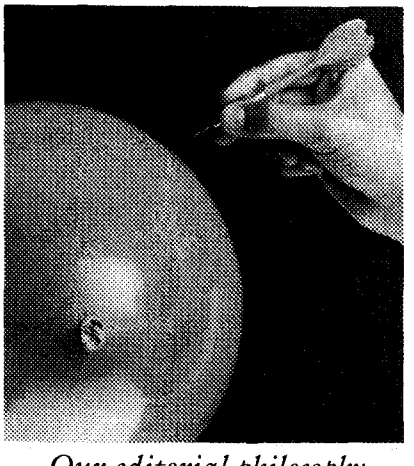

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useful if dull task of supplying us with information about other countries so that we might know more about what they'd like to buy from us. The hysterical tracking down of nuclear weapons is useless. After all, we, or our treasured allies, have armed all the world to the teeth. We have neither the money nor the brains to monitor every country on earth, which means, alas, that if some evil dictator in Madagascar wants to nuke or biologically degrade Washington, D.C., there's not much we can do about it. Certainly, the C.I.A., as now constituted, would be the last to know of his intention, though perhaps the first to get the good of his foul plot. I would abandon all the military-related secret services and I would keep the F.B.I. on a tight leash—no more dirty tricks against those who dislike the way that we are governed, and no more dossiers on those of us who might be able to find a way out of the mess we are in, best personified by the late J. Edgar Hoover and best memorialized by that Pennsylvania Avenue Babylonian fortress that still bears his infamous name.

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GARY M. STERN AND
MORTON H. HALPERIN

Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates suggested recently that his agency would begin focusing on "new requirements relating to, among other things, environmental, natural resource and health issues, indicating that the Intelligence Community has a wider range of customers than ever with interests that extend *beyond traditional national security concerns*." [Emphasis added.]

Gates's vision of the future role of the intelligence community raises fundamental problems about how our democratic government should function now that the cold war is over. The C.I.A. and all the other agencies of the intelligence community were established during the cold war for the sole purpose of protecting the United States from foreign military attack or domination, in particular by the Soviet Union in conjunction with a perceived international Communist conspiracy.

In order to perform their work, these agencies were granted special exceptions to the principles of openness that generally guide the working of the government. The public, as well as other noncleared government officials in the executive branch and Congress, was denied access to important government information and was thus shut out of meaningful debate on the affected government policy.

The heart of the problem is a secrecy and security clearance system that denies access to all noncleared persons, regardless of any individual need or public interest that may be served. Personnel granted access to national security information are subject to intrusive background investigations that often pry into their political, medical and sexual histories, and that in some agencies include polygraphs and random drug-testing. First Amendment rights of free expression and access to government information are also routinely infringed. Americans can be subjected to warrantless searches of their homes, offices, mail and luggage in national security cases—even where no illegal activities are suspected.

This secrecy system imposes severe political costs on our democratic government. Agencies operating under the aegis of national security are significantly less accountable to Congress, thus inhibiting the public debate that is essential to a healthy democracy. From the intelligence scandals investigated by the Church committee to Iran/*contra*, the intelligence community has blindsided Congress and the public with its corrupt practices.

Because of these extraordinary costs, none of the exceptions that apply to the intelligence community should apply to non-national security matters. There are obviously many threats to our national interest about which the government has legitimate concerns; it should be collecting and analyzing information on those threats.

But the government's approach to dealing with these types of problems must not come at the expense of the democratic principles that define how this country works. The debate over and establishment of international law enforcement, economic, environmental and social policies should not be constrained by a "need to know" based on some "top secret" security clearance. Government policy-makers, which should include all members of Congress and their staffs, must have free access to all pertinent information on these issues and the public too must be kept fully informed.

## *Prohibit the collection of non-security information.*

Any effort to combine national security and non-national security intelligence functions in an existing agency like the C.I.A. under more open standards will almost certainly result in continued excesses and abuses of secrecy. If the C.I.A. is tasked to focus on non-national security issues, the agency, the President and ultimately the courts will invariably treat those issues by the same unaccountable standards as they do traditional national security matters. In the executive's view, if the intelligence community is doing it, it must, by definition, involve national security; any challenge to the executive's view is not likely to be given much credence by the Rehnquist Supreme Court.

Accordingly, we recommend that the intelligence agencies be statutorily prohibited from intentionally collecting or analyzing non-national security information. If non-national security information is inadvertently collected, it should be passed on to the appropriate department. If a non-national security agency believes it needs the benefit of clandestinely collected information, it should be required to justify its need publicly and to obtain authorization from Congress. Analysis of non-national security issues should be conducted by the appropriate policy agency, or a separate analytical agency should be established to analyze such issues.

Thus, whatever is to remain of the intelligence community

*Gary M. Stern and Morton H. Halperin are legislative counsel and director, respectively, of the A.C.L.U. Washington office.*

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# THE THIRD ANNUAL NATION/I.F. STONE AWARD FOR STUDENT JOURNALISM

## ENTRY DEADLINE: JUNE 29, 1992

**PURPOSE:** The Nation Institute/I.F. Stone Award recognizes excellence in student journalism. Entries should exhibit the uniquely independent journalistic tradition of I.F. Stone. A self-described "Jeffersonian Marxist," Stone combined progressive politics, investigative zeal and a compulsion to tell the truth with a commitment to human rights and the exposure of injustice. As Washington editor of *The Nation* magazine and founder of the legendary *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, he specialized in publishing information ignored by the mainstream media (which he often found in *The Congressional Record* and other public documents overlooked by the big-circulation dailies).

**ELIGIBILITY:** The contest is open to all undergraduate students enrolled in a U.S. college. Articles may be submitted by the writers themselves or nominated by editors of student publications or faculty members. While entries originally published in student publications are preferred, all articles will be considered provided they were not written as part of a student's regular course work.

**THE PRIZE:** The article that, in the opinion of the judges, represents the most outstanding example of student journalism in the tradition of I.F. Stone will be published in a fall issue of *The Nation*. The winner will receive a cash award of $500. *The Nation* reserves the right to edit the winning article to conform to the space limitations of the magazine. Announcement of the winning article will be made in *The Nation* in the fall of 1992.

**DEADLINE:** All entries must be postmarked by June 29, 1992.

**ENTRY RULES:**

All entries must have been written or published between September 1, 1991, and June 29, 1992. Tear sheets or photocopies are acceptable.

Each writer, editor of a student publication or faculty member may submit up to three separate entries. A series of related articles will be considered as a single entry. Investigative articles are particularly encouraged. There are no restrictions as to scope, content or length.

Accompanying material in support of entries is not required, but entrants are encouraged to submit a cover letter explaining the context of the submitted story, along with a brief biographical note about the author. Elaborate presentations are neither required nor desired. Entries will not be returned.

Judges reserve the right to authenticate, accept or disallow entries at their discretion. The decision of the judges is final.

All entries must include the writer's school, home address and telephone number.

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after the cold war, it must not expand into new areas outside its narrow domain. There is no reason that people who want to deal with such issues as shortages of national resources, global health problems or economic competitiveness should be prevented from doing so by a secrecy and security system designed solely to protect the nation against the unusually grave threat of military attack.

## DAVID CORN

An intelligence agency reflects, most starkly, the government of which it is a part. The C.I.A. is no "rogue elephant," as Senator Frank Church dubbed it in the 1970s. When it plotted assassinations, encouraged coups, sponsored paramilitary adventures, it did so either at the explicit order or at the general direction of the President and as part of the national security bureaucracy. For a President, the C.I.A. embodies the temptation of power. Don't like what's happening in Laos, Nicaragua or Lebanon? Get on the horn to Langley; not to worry about those busybodies in Congress. Thy will be done.

The most necessary reform is change at the top. New priorities for U.S. foreign policy would have more impact on the national security apparatus than would any of the safe structural reforms now being discussed on Capitol Hill. But while we wait for that millennium, we should continue to question what sort of intelligence system the United States should have.

*Some crucial information can only be obtained by spying.*

Given the widespread acknowledgment that the red threat—whether it was real or not—has vanished, there is no longer justification for the more odious and undemocratic aspects of intelligence work. Into the dustbin-of-history category should fall covert paramilitary programs, meddling in free elections, coup plotting, suborning of journalists, secret propaganda campaigns, aid and advice to torturers, and the like.

But those of us who are not one-world optimists realize that so long as there remain actual threats to global peace and security—as opposed to manufactured threats—that are purposely hidden from public view by the nastier members of our species, there is a need for intelligence. Threats cannot be dealt with unless one possesses information about them. In an ideal world, the State Department would collect the information that policy-makers require to make informed decisions (and multinational agencies would do the same on a global scale). But the reality is that crucial information on a few important subjects can be obtained only through covert means.

An obvious example involves unconventional-weapons proliferation. I know of one case in the 1970s when a C.I.A. officer abroad recruited foreign agents who at great risk (paying people always helps) provided him with details about a particular nation's efforts to develop a nuclear bomb and the methods it took to deceive the United States and international watchdogs. Using this information, the Carter Administration was able to take steps against the bomb-building program. Of course, the international order should be such that there is no trade in nuclear technology that can be diverted to weapons production. Nevertheless, before that glorious day arrives, inquiring minds want to know who's getting the bomb. And that type of information is not always available on the open market.

Regrettably, spying is sometimes the only way to get it, and the United States should maintain an intelligence system—not a sprawling bureaucracy—that engages in narrowly defined clandestine information gathering, which would include tightly controlled electronic intercepts. There should be more and better oversight (yes, probably a futile exercise) in which members of Congress might review a secret annual report of all espionage assets. Attach the service to the State Department or the Pentagon? Details can be debated. The key point is that this service should not go hog wild. Vital targets have to be identified, and resources directed just at those subjects. We do not require spies and secret listeners everywhere, but a few in certain spots is not a bad idea. However, an intelligence service worth keeping can emerge only from a post–cold war government that pursues just and decent policies and that is fully accountable to its citizenry. (Such a government is my fantasy of choice, rather than harmonious multinational cooperation.) If these criteria are not met, then bag the whole business.

Space does not permit me to go into what should be done about the analytical side of the C.I.A.—a major portion of the agency. Suffice it to say, it must be worked over, depoliticized as much as possible (this is still government, after all) and made more open.

The United States should enter into cooperative arrangements in which information on natural resources, arms shipments, economies, populations, hunger and the environment is shared. But until irrationality is banished—how about those neo-Nazis in Germany?—the need for spooks will stay.

## JOHN AND ALICE TEPPER MARLIN

In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev questioned whether the Soviet Union and the United States were above a "reasonable sufficiency" in military spending. Today, as the economies of the former Soviet Union continue in a free fall, whatever used to be "reasonable" for the United States to spend on its military and its intelligence activities must be revised markedly downward.

In the 1980s, the United States increased defense spending by 50 percent even though the rest of the world was not keeping pace. The U.S. share of world military spending rose from 22 to 28 percent. In the 1990s, if U.S. military cuts remain as modest as those proposed by President Bush and the Pentagon, the U.S. share of world military spending can be expected to approach or exceed 50 percent.

When the United States pays up its U.N. bills, it limits its

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contributions to 25 percent of the U.N. budget, on the sound principle that it would be unhealthy for any one country to dominate world institutions. But U.S. military spending was 3 percentage points above this ceiling in 1989, and the figure is rising rapidly. By this standard, our military spending is looking more and more excessive.

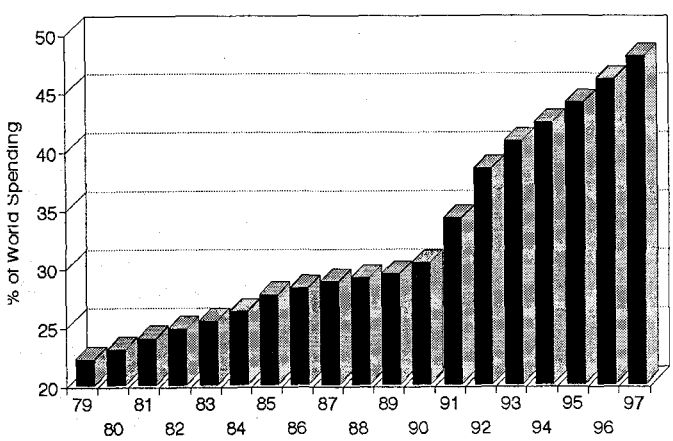
The arguments for cutting spending on intelligence activities parallel those regarding defense spending. When we are at war, we require more intelligence; when we are at peace, we need less. Yet good intelligence can prevent war as well as help win a war. Some argue that the Gulf War was caused by, among other things, failures of U.S. intelligence. More money doesn't insure better quality intelligence, or that information will be used properly. But a special case can be made for some forms of intelligence as war-avoiding activities—for example, verifying arms-control treaties, monitoring proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and tracking military R&D in other countries and above all keeping track of arms shipments among countries and among quasi-governments like large-scale drug dealers.

We ask two questions: First, should we not have *greater* intelligence than we have on environmental issues such as global warming and other disasters in the making? Second, to what extent do U.S. intelligence activities create the potential for adding to, rather than subtracting from, world tensions? It was a setback for the Russians when it was discovered that they were continuing to spy on the Europeans. Given that the United States will be increasingly vulnerable to the charge that it is the last bully left on the block, are our intelligence services managed so as to minimize the potential for undermining our leadership?

By failing to reduce its national security budget as sharply as most of the world, America stands out as the largest of the few countries that have not adjusted adequately to the end of the cold war. If we don't rein in both our military spending binge and our intelligence services, we risk becoming a pariah among free nations. As with defense, intelligence should be brought in line with domestic needs and priorities in the 1990s.

## U.S. Military-Spending Share

79-89 Actual, 90-97 Estimates

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Robert Sherrill tells the sordid story of the looting decade. It's a feisty account that shows how the S&L crisis was created, how the taxpayers were betrayed by their elected officials and government regulators, who the *chief scoundrels are and why the current bailout is a disaster.* Most important, Sherrill warns that the Feds, in willful ignorance of the lessons of the S&L disaster, are moving rapidly toward further deregulation of the big banks—a move that could lead to even greater financial disaster. This issue's importance is intensified by today's headlines. *(November 19, 1990)*

### The American Neo-Nazi Movement Today

Elinor Langer's well-researched and chilling look at the growth of skinhead, neo-Nazi and white supremacist hate groups with direct ideological links to the original Nazi movement. Langer concludes that something deeply disturbing is indeed happening here—something every American should comprehend and confront. *(July 16/23, 1990)*

### How on Earth?—Strategies For a Habitable Planet

*The Nation*'s special Earth Day 1990 issue features bold articles by Barry Commoner and Kirkpatrick Sale outlining down-to-earth technological and political strategies for preserving the planet. Commoner argues that government regulation has failed to persuade American corporations to clean up their act, and Sale argues that Earth Day 1990 commemorated the problem, not the solution. "To succeed," according to the issue's lead editorial, "environmental politics needs a movement." The solutions offered here are radical, but so is the problem. *(April 30, 1990)*

### 'Fetal Rights'—A New Assault on Feminism

Katha Pollitt focuses on the anti-choice forces' new strategy: persecuting women who carry or give birth to drug dependent or alcoholic children. Pollitt tells how mothers are being portrayed as "the major threat to unborn babies." Already in wide demand for college textbooks and academic courses in many disciplines. *(March 26, 1990)*

### Scapegoating the Black Family

Guest-edited and written by African-American women, this important *Nation* issue debunks the myths and exposes the reality of the black family. Margaret B. Wilkerson, Jewell Handy Gresham, Faye Wattleton and others. With a final appeal/challenge to America by speaker, activist and author Ossie Davis. This issue has received widespread attention in academic circles and was nominated for a National Magazine Award. *(July 24/31, 1989)*

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## Make My Rainy Day

DANIEL HARRIS

Within an entertainment industry expressly designed to absorb and commodify even the most unconventional talents, up-and-coming performers must face the fact that growing recognition of their work will ultimately compromise their integrity by forcing them to tone it down and smooth out the rough edges of their idiosyncrasies as they attempt to appeal to wide audiences. In the case of Madonna, however, the exact opposite has occurred. If co-optation involves the appropriation of a marginal artist by the mainstream, reverse co-optation involves the appropriation of a mainstream artist by a marginal group—in this case, the increasing numbers of academics who are currently flooding the country's journals and small presses with a glut of scholarship on the stylistic flamboyance—the glitz, guts and pure raunch—of a celebrity who has borne much of the brunt of the university's restless and uncertain engagement with popular culture. Madonna has been drafted into the staggeringly implausible role of spokeswoman of the values and professional interests of university instructors. Her academic admirers spend a great deal of time studying how she embodies the fantasies of other people; they devote remarkably little time, however, to discussing how she embodies their own.

A quick survey of the variety of responses to what mass-media pundit E. Ann Kaplan identifies in all seriousness as the "MP," the "Madonna Phenomenon," offers a fascinating look not only at contemporary academics' attempts to counteract their own marginality by making desperate forays into popular culture but also at the inadequacies of postmodernism itself and the conceptual limits of its application to specific uncanonized forms of lowbrow entertainment. There is a Madonna for virtually every theoretical stripe—the Lacanian Madonna of Marjorie Garber, who says that the singer's recent tendency to squeeze her crotch like a man while singing "emblematize[s] the Lacanian triad of having, being, and seeming"; the Foucauldian Madonna of Charles Wells, who claims that in her videos she "is instructing us with a Foucauldian flair in the 'end of woman' "; the Baudrillardian Madonna of Kathy Schwichtenberg, who reads "Madonna's figuration against the backdrop of Baudrillardian theory"; or the Marxist Madonna of Melanie Morton, who says that Madonna singlehandedly undermines "capitalist constructions" and "rejects core bourgeois epistemes." There is even the Freudian

*There is a Madonna for every theoretical stripe: Lacanian, Foucauldian, Baudrillardian . . .*

Madonna of Cindy Patton; in reference to the fact that the voluptuous members of Madonna's male dance troupe often appear on stage in the steamier numbers grinding and groaning as they massage outrageous strap-on falsies with masturbatory intensity, she claims that "the gendering of the breast is problematized through the evocation of breast envy . . . and implicitly [through the evocation of] men's desire to be lesbians." In Barbara Bradby's close reading of the lyrics of the song "Material Girl," titled "Like a Virgin-Mother?: Materialism and Maternalism in the Songs of Madonna," she, like Patton, plumbs the depths of our collective musical ids when she psychoanalyzes the lines "Only boys that save their pennies/Make my rainy day" in an effort to buttress her theory that Madonna is not passive and victimized but in fact nurturing and mothering:

> We may note that teaching children to save pennies (in piggy-banks, etc.) is an important function of mothers, if their children are to be successful. However, in this nursery context of early training, "saving pennies" evokes its opposite, "spending a penny," which little boys may think of as like "making rain." In this sense, potty training is about learning to "save pennies," or the ability to control the activity of "spending a penny." The lines, "Only boys that save their pennies/Make my rainy day" can therefore be taken as expressing the mother's approval of the boy who has learnt to pee in the appropriate situation.

Just as members of the left often sentimentalize the proletariat, so academics have begun to sentimentalize popular culture by ascribing to it all sorts of admirable characteristics that it does not have—in particular, the potential to radicalize the huddled masses by providing typically quiescent MTV viewers with what it is now fashionable to term "a site of contention" (or, in Charles Wells's marvelous malapropism, "a cite of contention"), a subversive forum within the mainstream where socially conscious performers can actively challenge reactionary patriarchal ideologies. In the inflationary rhetoric of the MP, however, the tail inevitably begins to wag the dog and Madonna emerges not simply as a pop star but as "the most significant artist of the late twentieth century," who, in the acknowledged masterpieces of her *oeuvre*, songs like "Cherish," "Papa Don't Preach" and "Like a Prayer," demolishes assumptions "foundational to liberal humanism," "rewrit[es] some very fundamental levels of Western thought" and even defies "the ongoing dominance of 'Western' culture by Protestantism." In "Madonna's Postmodern Feminism," Kathy Schwichtenberg strikes the apocalyptic note characteristic of the whole extravagant tenor of Madonna scholarship when she speculates wistfully about the sexual utopia that would result in American society if the performer's agenda of unbridled hedonism, her uncanny ability to "pluralize sexual practices" and transgress "the lines and boundaries that fragment gender polarities," were actually implemented. In Schwichtenberg's view, the world according to Madonna would be so emancipated, so polymorphously perverse, that we could all " 'come out' and participate in a range of identities such as a lesbian heterosexual, a heterosexual lesbian, a male lesbian, a female gay man, or even a feminist sex radical."

The meteoric growth of the MP reflects changes that are occurring in the perception of popular art not only among academics but among mainstream

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pop critics as well. In the past few decades, there has been an ironic switch of roles between the two major sectors of cultural commentators in our society. Mainstream reviewers are gradually assuming the mantle abandoned by academics, that of the custodian of High Art, criticizing Madonna as a talentless opportunist, a monster created by the publicity machine, a nasty scourge in an unmitigatedly vulgar pop music scene; while academics are wrapping themselves in a populist flag and interpreting Madonna as nothing less than a grass-roots revolutionary.

The psychological mechanism behind this recent orgy of slumming in the university has, in my view, little to do with its participants' genuine interest in popular culture and even less with the real pleasure it is possible to take from it. Rather, it is motivated by professional factors *within* the academy—specifically, by many academics' desire to prove their social relevance. The MP is really not about Madonna at all but about dissatisfaction with insulting stereotypes of the Ivory Tower, stereotypes some academics reject by flouting the decorum of traditional fields of study in what often seems, at least in the kitschier examples of postmodern scholarly extremism, to be a magnificently executed practical joke on the conventional disciplines of the liberal arts. Madonna scholars see themselves as iconoclasts rebelling against the suffocating strictures of High Art, as devilish pranksters shocking prudish humanists who hurl themselves melodramatically in front of the canon in order to shield it maternally from assault. It is one of the great ironies of the whole phenomenon of slumming that the perception of radicalism on the part of those who go rooting around amid the rubbish of popular culture, defying the ordinances of the classical definition of the humanities, derives from their increasing contacts with conformist mainstream culture, a forum that is anything *but* radical—or more precisely, that is radical only within the context of divisive skirmishes occurring within the university itself.

Despite this new tendency to sentimentalize popular culture and exaggerate its subversive content, Madonna studies in fact represent the ultimate act of cultural imperialism in the sense that Madonna simply provides a lift into the saddle for the inevitable ride on academics' all-too-predictable hobbyhorses. Such theorists are often quite frank about the naked opportunism of their pillaging of lowbrow art. In her preface to the forthcoming (Westview, October 1992) anthology *The Madonna Connection*, Schwichtenberg states explicitly that "this volume demonstrates Madonna's usefulness as a paradigm case to advance further developments in cultural theory." Kaplan, the acknowledged torchbearer of Madonna studies, refers to the performer's contributions to MTV as "an especially appropriate proving ground for postmodern theories." This tendency to turn Madonna into a classroom aid becomes most obvious when one examines the basic methods by which her admirers interpret her songs and videos—in particular, the intensive close readings they perform with the grisly clinical efficiency of autopsies. These astonishing note-by-note and frame-by-frame vivisections of Madonna's work, which surely constitute some of the strangest intellectual curiosities to have emerged from the university, reveal the devastating insufficiency of postmodernism as a vehicle for cultural analysis. Academics interpret even the melodies of these conventional pop hits as "strategies" for effecting revolutionary changes in listeners, as if Madonna were capable of rousing the slumbering

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masses from their oppression with unoriginal Top-40 songs postmodernists take quite literally as clarion calls for action.

In "Living to Tell: Madonna's Resurrection of the Fleshly," Susan McClary examines the "brave new musical procedures" of each bar of "Like a Prayer" in order to show that Madonna, who is "as much an expert in the arena of musical signification as [Teresa] de Lauretis is in theoretical discourse," "offers musical structures that promise narrative closure at the same time that she resists or subverts them," thus "destabilizing the male gaze" and rendering the *coup de grâce* to patriarchy. Similarly, in "Don't Go for Second Sex, Baby," a deconstructionist analysis of the song "Express Yourself," Morton transforms a pop hit into a rabble-rousing postmodernist anthem, the "Internationale" of the dance floor, which "takes as its object the general logic and various practices of domination most prevalent in Western culture." Subverting melodic authority by challenging oppressive tonal hierarchies, Madonna decimates "patriarchal, racist, and capitalist constructions" simply in the way she bellows out "self" in the line "Express your*self*!"

> [The word becomes a meditation] on the constitution of a de-centered subjectivity. "Self" is first sung on G, then on F sharp, moving to F natural, then on G, moving back to F sharp, and lastly (not counting repeated bars) self is sung on F sharp to F. The word as well as the concept gets divided and put in motion, articulating agency through positions which remain partial and temporary. . . . [Madonna's melodies thus] prevent what we would call in narrative terms an ideological closure. There is no recapitulation which fixes power and establishes (or re-establishes) any element as dominant.

As seen here in the way academics overinterpret Madonna's songs, close reading represents the inappropriate transfer to low culture of habits of study derived from high culture, habits that assume that the work of art under scrutiny is so complex that it deserves to be examined in all of its nuances. Because such techniques presuppose conventional notions of authorship, as well as misconceptions about the density of artistic intentions in commercial entertainment, they are suffused with the humanistic reverence for canonical art that postmodernists flatter themselves they have long since outgrown. In the very act of turning away from high culture and spurning the pieties lavished on the canon, academics demonstrate how incomplete the postmodernist break with traditional forms of artistic analysis has been, how abysmally they have failed to take popular culture on its own terms and how unimaginatively they insist on studying one set of cultural artifacts exactly as they study an entirely different and more literary set. Their treatment of popular culture is inherently elitist. At their most postmodern, academics remain dyed-in-the-wool humanists.

That critical theorists simply borrow the methodology of traditional scholars can also be seen in the way they attempt to create a unified artistic form out of the fragmented rock video, whose deconstructed "text" inevitably provokes frantic efforts to fuse all of its component parts into an integrated composition. Intolerant of the cinematic confusion of MTV—the non sequiturs, the jump cuts, the decontextualized images, the random breaks in visual syntax—scholars like Kaplan and John Fiske engage in spectacular feats of overinterpretation to restore seamless narrative continuity to something that is by nature disjunctive. Concluding that Madonna's videos lack "closure" and therefore liberate the female viewer by allowing her to interpret the images as she chooses, thus leaving her in "a position of power vis-à-vis the text," Kaplan and Fiske paradoxically recycle the high-art concept of organic unity. They distill from a wide range of very disparate pieces a single encompassing idea, the master theme, the skeleton key that unlocks every door—the absence of ideological and narrative resolution, an interpretation they apply indiscriminately, oblivious to the irony that works of art purported to have such little closure should become in their hands so hermetically closed.

This never-ending attempt to silence the clamor of incoherence with pat, reductive readings about empowering "syntagmatic gaps" that produce a malleability of form academics describe as somehow intellectually nutritious for the viewer shows how determined postmodernists can be in quarrying out of the garbled obscurities of MTV themes as monolithic, invariable and all-inclusive as those developed by New Critics in the cribs and trots with which they once led their readers through the enigmas of modernist art. Moreover, "lack of closure" is in itself a high-art concept, for what is this mystifying property that academics bestow so sanctimoniously on popular culture but the New Critical concept of "ambiguity"

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in disguise, a quality that critics have long reserved as the highest form of praise for canonical works of art?

But perhaps the clearest example of the way postmodernists cling tenaciously to the values and procedures of conservative scholars is the tendentiousness with which they examine every pose Madonna strikes for the taint of ideological corruption. In "Images of Race and Religion in 'Like a Prayer,' " Ronald Scott scours the song's video for "the positive social messages imbedded" within it, agonizing over such questions as whether the black character in the piece is actually lying on top of Madonna as she sprawls defenselessly over a pew, an image that may be contaminated with negative stereotypes. In " 'Material Girl': The Effacements of Postmodern Culture," Susan Bordo takes this didactic political nit-picking one step further when she describes Madonna as a kind of antifeminist scab, an unprincipled collaborator with the opposite sex, who recently rejected the voluptuous proportions of the full-figured female when she submitted to a punishing exercise and diet regimen in an effort to satisfy the patriarchal ideal of svelte feminine beauty. This moralizing of every bump and grind that Madonna makes, of every inch of cleavage she bares and every glimpse of navel she flashes, demonstrates the full extent of the intellectual chauvinism implicit in the academics' engagement with popular culture.

While Madonna scholars share the philosophical posturing and muddled politics characteristic of contemporary critical discourse as a whole, her admirers' wild exaggerations of her subtlety as an "author" are even more untenable than the evasive generalities found in theoretical work on conventional literary subjects. It is even tempting to enter into the Swiftian spirit of overstatement that suffuses the books and articles about her and conclude apocalyptically that postmodernism *is* Madonna, that the banality of Madonna is in some sense its fate, the logical conclusion of its aims and assertions. As she is remade into Theory incarnate and invested with a radicalism that her public image as a mainstream performer cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, sustain, she becomes the ultimate realization of many postmodernists' most cherished tenet—that words have only an arbitrary relationship with the things they signify and that there is no stable and empirically verifiable "reality" behind the vagaries and impermanence of language. As E. Deirdre Pribram put it in her analysis of last year's documentary *Truth or Dare*, "Madonna, this chameleon-of-appearances . . . refuses all fixed meanings . . . there is no definitive 'real,' no authentic Madonna beyond the person(a) we already know through her various incarnations." When a signifier becomes as "free-floating," as unmoored from the thing it signifies as Pribram suggests that Madonna has become, the consequence is what some would call "slippage" but might be more aptly characterized as outright *detachment*, a state of intellectual anarchy that sanctions willfully perverse misreadings. Some theorists have even gone so far as to justify the poetic license with which they treat their subjects by suggesting that, as Charles Wells writes in his master's essay on Madonna, titled "Like a Thesis," "rationality is a patriarchal trick. . . . All readings, in some way, are misreadings. All interpretation is misinterpretation. Though the page you are now reading appears to be flat, that is an illusion." Such skeptical caveats go a long way toward explaining the literature of the MP: Although it appears to be about Madonna, *that* is an illusion. □

# Straight From Underground

ROBIN D.G. KELLEY

For nearly all black Angelenos, not to mention most inner-city residents, the videotaped beating of Rodney King was no surprise at all. When L.A. rapper Ice Cube was asked about the King incident on MTV, he responded simply, "It's been happening to us for years. It's just we didn't have a camcorder every time it happened." The two gang members interviewed by Ted Koppel on May 1, "Bone" and "Little Monster," not only vehemently and persuasively argued that the King beating was a tiny example of everyday occurrences on the streets of South Central but spoke eloquently about the consistent rise in police brutality, beginning with the killing of Eula Love in 1979 and the infamous "chokehold" deaths at the hands of the L.A.P.D.

The increase in street crime as a result of unemployment and immiseration, compounded by the introduction of crack cocaine in the mid-1980s, generated such fear in L.A. that even some liberals turned their attention away from the chokehold victims and supported the unconstitutional "gang sweeps" initiated under the rubric of the war on drugs. With the militarization of South Central during this period, the emergent L.A. hip-hop community made police brutality the central theme of their distinctive West Coast style. As early as 1985, much of black Los Angeles (myself included) rocked to the rhythm of "Batteram," a hit single from an obscure local rapper named Toddy Tee that exploded on the airwaves soon after Police Chief Daryl Gates introduced the new weapon in the drug war. Ice T's "Squeeze the Trigger," from his debut album *Rhyme Pays* (1987), continued the trend, warning listeners that "Cops kill kids with warnin' shots." Not coincidentally, Niggas With Attitude's "F— Tha Police" from their hit album *Straight Outta Compton* (1988) was released about the time Chief Gates implemented "Operation Hammer," arresting 1,500 black youths in South Central for merely "looking suspicious." While most were charged with minor offenses like curfew and traffic violations, some were not charged at all but simply had their names and addresses logged in the L.A.P.D. antigang task force database, which, ironically, is called a "rap sheet." The context is important, since "F— Tha Police" is still N.W.A.'s most talked about song—indeed, it even emerged as a slogan during the demonstrations surrounding Rodney King's beating. Opening with a mock trial in which N.W.A. is the judge and jury and the police are the defendants, the song has each member of the group offer his own testimony. After promising to tell "the whole truth and nothing but the truth," Ice Cube (who has since left the group) takes the stand and explodes with an indictment against racism, repression and the common practice of criminalizing all black youth:

> Fuck the police coming straight from the underground.
> A young nigger got it bad 'cause I'm brown.
> I'm not the other color.
> Some police think
> They have the authority to kill a minority . . .

*Robin D.G. Kelley teaches history and Afro-American studies at the University of Michigan. He is writing a book about the black urban poor.*

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Fuckin' with me 'cause I'm a teenager,
With a little bit of gold and a pager
Searching my car, looking for the product.
Thinking every nigger is selling narcotics.

The themes developed by N.W.A. in 1988 evolved into a more systematic effort to understand the relationship between police repression and their own political and economic powerlessness. Rappers like Ice Cube, Compton's Most Wanted, Cypress Hill, Above the Law, Mob Style, King Tee, the Rhyme Syndicate, Poison Clan, Capital Punishment Organization, the predominantly Samoan Booo-Yaa Tribe, the DOC, DJ Quick and Chicano rappers like Kid Frost, to name but a few, try to place their descriptions of police repression within a broader context of social control. "One Time's" or "Five-O's," as the police are called in L.A., are portrayed as part of a larger system of racist and class domination that includes black officers. For W.C. and the MAAD Circle, policing as a form of racial and class oppression is part of a longer historical tradition etched in the collective memory of African-Americans. "Behind Closed Doors" begins with lead rapper W.C. writing a letter of complaint to the chief of police describing an incident in which he was beaten and subsequently shot by officers with no provocation. In just a few lines W.C. links antebellum slavery and Depression-era fascism to the beating of Rodney King:

Still I stayed calm and took the pain,
Picturing my ancestors going through the same thing,
But then I started thinking about the brother from Altadena [King],
Who was to say I wasn't next on the agenda,
So I got up, flipped, hurdled, hit the corner
With flashbacks of Hitler chasing Jesse Owens . . .
I'm paralyzed waist down from a bullet wound
And now I'm being charged for resisting arrest.
But it was either catch a bullet or be beaten to death.

Mirroring much current political discourse in urban black America, some L.A. rappers insist that police repression is a genocidal war against blacks. Ice Cube's "Endangered Species (Tales From the Darkside)" begins with the voice of a female newscaster stating matter-of-factly that young black teenagers have been added to the "endangered species list." "As of now," she adds, "the government has not made steps to preserve the blacks. When asked why, a top law official said, ' 'cause they make good game.' " Cube's lyrics underscore the point that the role of law enforcement is to protect the status quo and keep black folks in check:

Every cop killer goes ignored,
They just send another nigger to the morgue.
A point scored. They could give a fuck about us.
They'd rather catch us with guns and white powder. . . .
They'd kill ten of me to get the job correct
To serve, protect, and break a nigger's neck.

Constant police harassment has had the effect of stripping black youth in L.A. of their citizenship and, for many, has eroded any sense of justice. The verdict in the Rodney King trial merely made it official, much like the Dred Scott case of over a century ago. Most L.A. rappers insist that poor African-Americans are second-class citizens—"niggaz"—whose collective lived experiences suggest that nothing has changed for them, as opposed to the black middle class. Part of N.W.A.'s "Niggaz4Life," for instance, uses "nigga" almost as a synonym for "oppressed"—and at the core of repression is police brutality:

Why I call myself a nigger, you ask me,
It's because motherfuckers wanna blast me,
And run me out of my neighborhood
And label me as a dope dealer, yo, and say that I'm no good. . . .

. . .

Why do I call myself a nigger you ask me,
'Cause police always want to harass me,
Everytime that I'm rollin'
They swear up and down that the car was stolen,
Make me get face down on the street
And throw the shit out my car on the concrete. . . .

The erosion of justice, combined with an intensification of poverty and joblessness, logically leads to a refusal to respect the law. A line from Ice T's "Squeeze the Trigger" perhaps best articulates a pervasive attitude among dispossessed youth of L.A.'s inner city. He asks, "What is crime and what is not? What is Justice? I think I forgot." In an era when the mainstream media, conservative policy specialists and some social scientists are claiming that the increase in street crime can be explained by some pathological culture of violence bereft of the moder-

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ating influences of a black middle class, L.A.'s rappers keep returning to the idea that joblessness and crime are directly related. M.C. Ren of N.W.A., for example, blames "the people who are holding the dollars in the city" for the expansion of gang violence and crime, arguing that if black youth had decent jobs, they would not need to participate in the illicit economy. "It's their fault simply because they refused to employ black people. How would you feel if you went for job after job and each time, for no good reason, you're turned down?" Of course, the successes and failures, benefits and pitfalls of various criminal capers occupy a significant portion of hip-hop narratives about inner-city life, but these artists are just as quick to turn the labels of "criminal" and "violent" back onto the people and institutions that control their lives. Ice T's "Street Killer," for example, is a brief monologue that sounds like the boasts of a heartless gang banger but turns out to be those of a cop. Even more common throughout black inner-city communities is the insistence that the real criminals can be found in government, especially the White House. Dozens of rap artists, both inside and outside L.A., indict "America" for stealing land, facilitating the drug trade and waging large-scale "drive-by shootings" against weaker countries such as Panama and Iraq. One recent example of such an indictment was Bone and Little Monster's insistence, during their interview with Koppel, that the savings and loan scandal was a much greater crime than the looting—but most of the participants in the S&L debacle never saw the inside of a jail cell.

Yet a number of L.A. rappers also insist that crime and violence are both destructive *and* potentially emancipatory. In "Get Up on That Funk," W.C. describes the Minority Alliance of Anti-Discrimination as "an organization of my homeboys/Stealin' from the rich and famous/And give it back to the poor folks in the slums/Cause neither one of us forgot where we came from." Ice Cube takes the Robin Hood metaphor a step further, calling for the "ultimate drive-by" to be aimed at the U.S. government. In a recent interview, he even suggested that gang bangers "are our warriors. . . . It's just they're fighting the wrong gang." The gang they ought to be fighting, he tells us, is "the government of the United States."

Of course, the idea of the Crips and the Bloods becoming a revolutionary guerrilla army seems ludicrous, especially given


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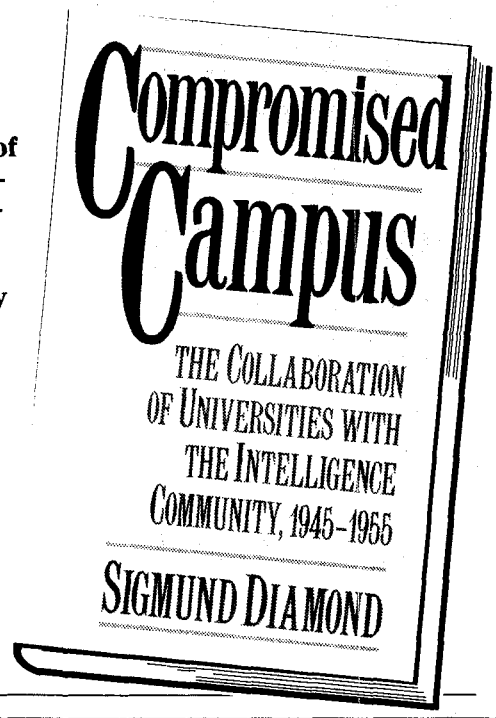


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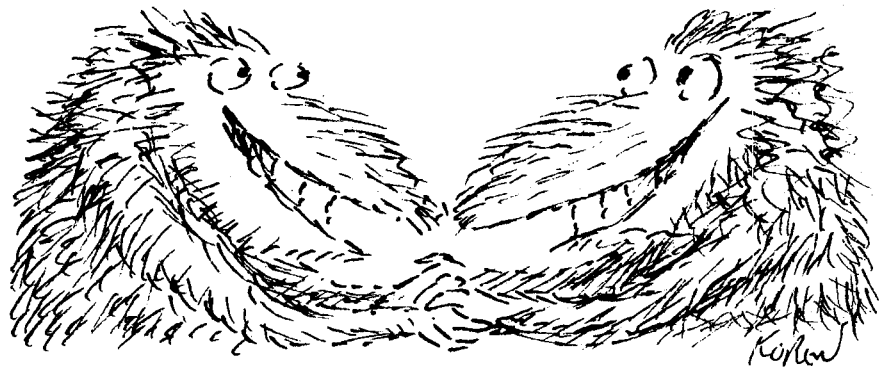

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the role street gangs have assumed as protectors of the illicit economy. Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind that the hip-hop generation grew up watching reruns of *The Spook Who Sat by the Door*, and some even read the book. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* convinced untold numbers of kids that even second-rate gangsters can become political radicals. And it's possible that a few black Angelenos absorbed some "O.G." (original gangsta) oral history about the gang roots of the Los Angeles Black Panther Party.

For those who see only apolitical, misinformed nihilists hiding behind Raiders caps, sunglasses, biker shorts and Dolphin earrings, the emancipatory possibilities hinted at by a handful of West Coast rappers can only be wishful thinking. I'm not suggesting that the hip-hop generation's response to police repression and poverty always offers the most progressive or insightful analyses, and some of these male voices are brutally misogynistic. Nor should music be a substitute for politics. But knowing how young people see the world around them may provide a few building blocks for a more radical practice. Moreover, we should recognize that the folks who occupy the social and spatial fringes of the postindustrial city experience everyday life in ways that mainstream black political leaders or traditional intellectuals do not.

As I watched the "on the ground" videotape of the black and Latino poor seizing property and destroying what many regarded as symbols of domination, I could not help but notice the joy and sense of empowerment expressed in their faces. It strengthened my belief that the inner cities are the logical place for a new radical movement in post–cold war America.

In my most optimistic moments, I envision an army of committed folks—"soulja's," as they say in the hood—informed by the lessons of lived experience, daily conversations and an inchoate analysis of power, which has been acquired not only from the streets but from audiotapes, CDs and pop magazines like *The Source: The Magazine of Hip-Hop Music, Culture & Politics* (though they may occasionally pick up a copy of *The Nation*). But nothing is certain, except the further deterioration of already unlivable neighborhoods. The most likely scenario is mo' misery, mo' misery and mo' misery, combined with mo' uprisings, mo' repression and mo' blame placed on single mothers for raising "violent" children in "dysfunctional" families. In other words, dig in folks: I suspect we won't have to wait until the 2020s for another outbreak like this one. But if we want to know the political climate on the streets, we can't "truss" CNN; this time, we must read the graffiti on the walls and, as Ice T puts it, "check the pulse of the rhyme flow." □

# THEATER.

## THOMAS M. DISCH

**Falsettos**
**Jelly's Last Jam**
**A Streetcar Named Desire**
**Guys and Dolls**
**A Small Family Business**
**Two Trains Running**

The Broadway season ended with a spate of openings, most of which have been well enough received to continue through the end of May, when the Tony awards are parceled out. Of the six Broadway plays under review here, four are up for Tonys as best of their category, and account for thirty-two nominations among them. While I certainly enjoyed most of what is offered, I confess that overall I was underwhelmed. *Falsettos*, after all, is not a new musical but a belated restaging of two Off Broadway hits from earlier seasons. *Guys and Dolls* and *Streetcar* are revivals of fail-safe dependability. *Jelly's Last Jam* is new, except for its music, which is (mostly) by Jelly Roll Morton. *Two Trains Running* struck me as the feeblest of August Wilson's plays to date, not to say dull. *A Small Family Business* is an English import from that nation's most dependable purveyor of comedy, Alan Ayckbourn. It adds up to a lot of good theater without doing much to dampen my conviction that Broadway is devolving from a venue of living theater to a permanent summer stock company catering to a captive audience of tourists.

The most nearly living art form left on Broadway is surely the musical comedy, and nothing better exemplifies the present paucity of creative energy than the fact that of the six musicals to receive major Tony attention, only one, *Falsettos*, has an original musical score. In that category, the composer and lyricist William Finn is up against the jazz immortal Jelly Roll Morton (which is a little like a playwright having to contend against Eugene O'Neill) and two shows that flopped on a bellywhopper scale, *Nick and Nora* and the Polish import *Metro*. In these circumstances Finn would seem a certain winner, and even though I don't like the tendencies embodied in his work—to an intimate, cabaret scale and to an unrelentingly jittery musical texture long on recitative and short on songs—it must be admitted that he embodies those tendencies with a lot of professional competence. So, while I would still give the Best Musical award to the Gershwins' *Crazy for You*, Finn would have my vote (if I had one) for best score on a *faute de mieux* basis.

I did not see *March of the Falsettos* when it appeared in 1981, and to see it now serving as Act I to the much superior Act II represented by *Falsettoland* of 1990 makes me doubt the wisdom of pairing them. Except for its one show-stopper, "I'm Breaking Down," sung with comic brio by Barbara Walsh, Act I offers little that Act II doesn't provide in a more emotionally intense and/or musically effective form. In 1981, so great was the novelty of having a musical with the love interest between two normatively virile men that it sufficed in itself to give the play a raison d'être. Nothing much else out of the ordinary had to happen. But AIDS did anyhow, and in 1990 Finn and James Lapine, director and co-writer of the book, were inspired to create a sequel in which the lovers, Marvin and Whizzer, separated in Act I by Whizzer's fickle nature, are reunited just in time for Whizzer to be stricken and die. What makes *Falsettos* inadvertently more heartbreaking than the many other plays in which gay lovers are parted by AIDS is that Marvin and Whizzer had autonomous lives on stage before AIDS was known to exist. Whizzer's death (and the never-referred-to threat to Marvin's long-term survival) has much the same this-can't-be-happening-to-him horror and poignancy that it has in the real world, because Whizzer, unlike most other characters with AIDS, didn't come into dramatic existence in order to serve as a victim.

Performance-wise, Michael Rupert and Stephen Bogardus, returning once again to the roles they created eleven years ago, haven't tarnished a bit, though just in growing older they've given the story a somewhat different spin. My sense of the matter is that the actors have caught up with their characters in age. Rupert as Marvin now looks like a middle-aged man who might leave his wife and 12-year-old son for a hunky lover, whose good looks and trim condition have the fragility peculiar to those gays of a certain age who aspire to be forever young.

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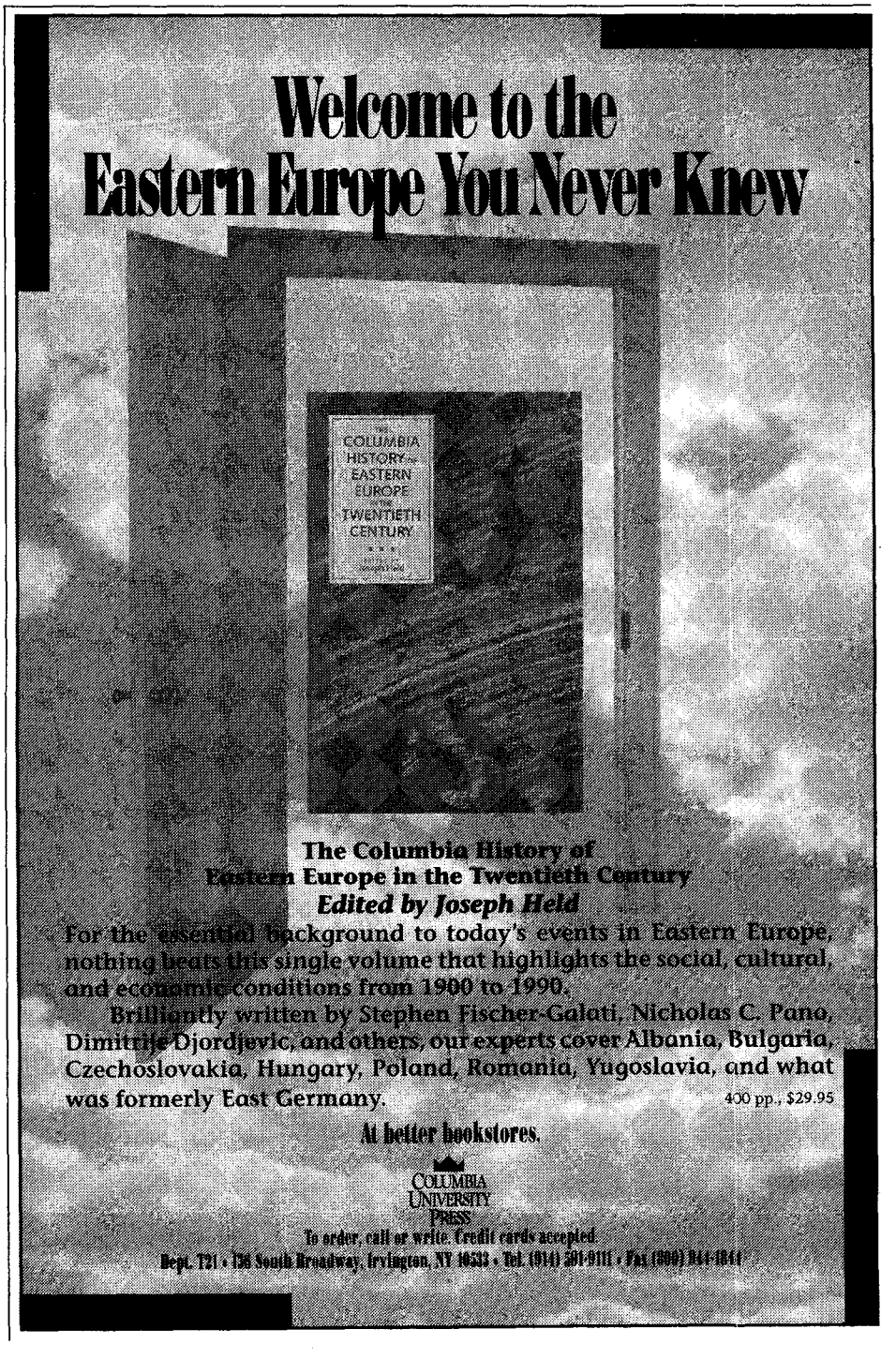
Rupert surely merits a Tony nomination for his performance, but Stephen Bogardus is quite as deserving. In the category of supporting performance, Barbara Walsh and Jonathan Kaplan as Marvin's wife and son are both up for Tonys. So is James Lapine, both as director and as co-writer of the book. Significantly, *Falsettos* is not a contender in those categories we usually associate with great musicals: choreography, sets and costumes. The physical production is scruffy and humdrum and couldn't easily be otherwise, given the material. The audience for *Falsettos* is there to wet their handkerchiefs, not tap their toes. It's at the John Golden Theatre.

It is surely symptomatic of musical comedy's feeble health that the book for *Jelly's Last Jam*—at the Virginia Theatre—is the work of the show's director, George C. Wolfe (and that director Lapine co-wrote the book for *Falsettos*). The more charismatic directors of the past often enough made over musicals to suit themselves (Bob Fosse's movie *All That Jazz* documents the process); but nowadays directors have such a monopoly on the bankability of shows, and so much of the conceptual fuel is their work, that writers are becoming increasingly superfluous. The result is often a musical about making musicals (*A Chorus Line*), or at least about musicians, often in the form of a biography recapping the life of the composer whose works are to be exploited. *Jelly's Last Jam* is an unusually successful biopic musical that manages most of the time to escape the revue format of such enterprises. It is also more than a vehicle for making its star, Gregory Hines, look his best, though he surely does.

Along with Savion Glover as his younger self, Hines extracts juices from the art of tap dancing that are the aesthetic equivalent of blood from a turnip. Tap has always struck me as a dance form, like figure skating, that is intrinsically limited in its expressive potential. The need to make one's feet a percussion instrument is too much at odds with the use of a full choreographic palette. The show's tap choreography, which is credited to Hines and Ted L. Levy, has made me rethink that theory, but not because the nontap choreography by Hope Clarke was less than top-notch. *Jelly's Last Jam* has enough large-scale, stage-filling, whoop-de-do production numbers to satisfy everyone who goes to musicals for that pleasure which is both the crowning glory and lowest common denominator of the musical comedy—the reason that a numskulled but fun-loving revue like *The Will Rogers Follies* carried off last year's Tony for Best Musical, and the reason that *Jelly's Last Jam* could enjoy the same reward. My own first choice would still be *Crazy for You*, by virtue of its book, the Gershwin music and Susan Stroman's choreography. But if one factors in individual performances, the scales might tip back to *Jelly*, for not only are Hines and Glover odds-on favorites but the show also has the most impressive female performances of the season, though by one of those quirks of the nomination process, the show's leading lady, Tonya Pinkins, is contending in the Featured Actress category. Her rendition of "Play the Music for Me" is sweet and dirty as raspberries straight off the bush, and the following number, "Loving Is a Lowdown Blues," sung by the trio of Mamie Duncan-Gibbs, Stephanie Pope and Allison M. Williams, pours bourbon over the raspberries.

I might have no reservations at all about *Jelly's Last Jam* had I not had occasion last year to see, at Baltimore's Center Stage Theater, the premiere of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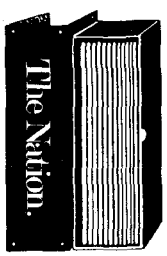


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Eric Overmeyer's *The Heliotrope Bouquet by Scott Joplin and Louis Chauvin* (my review of which had to be dropped for lack of timeliness). Like *Jelly*, Overmeyer's play takes the form of a posthumous reassessment by a great jazz composer of his life and career. But while Wolfe handles the supernatural element of his story as though it were an automatic shift, inventing a Charon figure, the Chimney Man, played with no great pizazz by Keith David, who functions either as a *This Is Your Life* M.C. or as a scold, Overmeyer took every imaginative advantage of the supernal occasion and unfurled some genuine poetry. Poetry is what Wolfe's book chiefly lacks, whenever the music is not in control, and even a few times when it is. You should go, even so. It's a treat.

## *Brando and Leigh make* Streetcar *a hard revival.*

Also a treat is the revival of *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Ethel Barrymore, though the Tony nominators have been ungenerous toward it, citing only the much-meriting Alec Baldwin in the category of Leading Actor but denying the show as a whole a slot in the Best Revival category (while honoring the innocuous *On Borrowed Time*). Because of the indelible movie version with Marlon Brando and Vivian Leigh, *Streetcar* has a hard time in revivals. Audiences want a *Streetcar* just like that, with a Stanley Kowalski who is a Neanderthal and a Blanche DuBois who is, despite the booze, a mimosa of sensitivity and refinement. It is greatly to director Gregory Mosher's credit that he has discovered an entirely different polarity within the text, one that refuses to take Blanche's (and Williams's) "poetry" at face value. Mosher gives the play a naturalistic reading in which Stanley is a guy of average intelligence and normal appetites and Blanche's lofty sentiments are always noticeably tawdry and self-deceiving. I doubt Tennessee Williams would give his approval, since in offering us a Blanche as flaky and off-putting as Jessica Lange's, Mosher can't help but render a sideways judgment on the author, who surely had cast his own soul as Blanche when he wrote the play. It is a credit to his dramatic genius—that is, to the autonomy of those characters who *aren't* Tennessee Williams in disguise—that the play works even better in this version. Amy Madigan as Stella goes through the same reverse sea-change into someone plain and ordinary, and she too is wonderful.

The week that saw revivals of both *Streetcar* and *Guys and Dolls* must have been unsettling for Marlon Brando, though his ownership of the role of Sky Masterson was never as secure as his claim to be the One and Only Stanley Kowalski. Still, his was the only Sky I'd seen till the present revival at the Martin Beck, and for my money, he doesn't have to worry about Peter Gallagher. This *Guys and Dolls* has been approved by most of the critics and it's *the* box-office hit of the season, but I have to say I found it more in the nature of Official Replica than Best Revival—to the degree that there is stage business lifted in exact detail from the movie (and so, I suppose, from the original production).

Faith Prince in the role of Miss Adelaide is the most capable of the replicants. She belts out "Adelaide's Lament" and "Take Back Your Mink" with drollery and gusto. But Nathan Lane as Nathan Detroit never reaches escape velocity. His voice is white bread when rye is required. On "Sue Me," his duet with Adelaide, which should be his moment of glory, he makes *Nu* sound like *new*. His mustache is a mistake, for which the program says that David H. Lawrence should be blamed.

Gallagher as Sky Masterson and Josie de Guzman as Sarah Brown are well paired. Theirs is just the sort of vocally impeccable and dramatically perfunctory performance one might expect to see at the New York State Opera. The sets by Tony Walton are very pretty and knowingly referential to the original sets by Jo Mielziner. William Ivey Long's costumes go overboard in the direction of garish. The entire wasted opportunity was directed by Jerry Zaks.

I suspect that the *Guys and Dolls* I would like to have seen would have met the same fate as Mosher's *Streetcar*, but I will indicate anyhow what it might have been. *Guys and Dolls* is one of those archetypal popular hits, like *Madam Butterfly* or *The Mikado*, that flatter and challenge the audience by transposing home truths into the key of an alien culture. Madam Butterfly is every Italian housewife who finds herself alone with the bambini after the honeymoon is over and wants to kill herself for very loneliness. And the eponymous Guys and

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Dolls, who date from 1950, are the raffish daydream-reflections of the middle-class audience of that era, enacting the basic marriage myth of the criminal/businessman (a familiar musical comedy figure from Macheath to Mack the Knife) redeemed by the domesticating love of a virtuous woman, who is able to do this because in *her* secret life (when she flies with Sky to Cuba) she's a doll (read: no better than she should be, or whore). These are scarcely subtexts in *Guys and Dolls*; they're the plot. How the actors inhabit their story, their deftness in making the audience catch a glimpse of itself in the mirror of their art, and their irony or lack thereof—it is to coordinate these choices that a director is required. And what Zaks has opted for as director is zero irony (though the text and the music are drenched in it) and lots of off-the-rack showbiz glitz. Feh.

A *Small Family Business* at The Music Box is yet another top-notch comedy by England's Alan Ayckbourn. Ayckbourn, clever fellow that he is, has come up once again with a brand-new gimmick that is integral to his plot, which concerns the machinations of a large family whose business is the manufacture of furniture of the sort one might buy in New York at Conran's. Blond wood, simple lines, good design, inexpensive—the sort of basically acceptable furniture you see everywhere. And so the same six-room set by John Lee Beatty (who is up for a Tony, deservedly) serves to represent the homes of three separate couples. Isn't it logical? They get it wholesale. And, as the action gets complicated, as it always does in an Ayckbourn comedy, the same set will serve, simultaneously, as two different houses.

I will not otherwise spoil the surprises of the plot, except to praise the drollery of Anthony Heald in the role of Benedict Hough, a private eye of consummate smarminess, and to chortle at the mugging of Jake Weber, who plays five Italian brothers (though not simultaneously). The rest of the cast play the kind of mildly eccentric characters that are the stock in trade of all writers of farce, who keep their machinery running with tics. You either enjoy that sort of thing or you sniff and complain of artificiality. Myself, I love it.

I do not love August Wilson's latest Serious Drama at the Walter Kerr Theatre, *Two Trains Running*—I like it less even than *Fences*, which got to seem a very long sit. This one is longer still. But I can assure you that it is above reproach.

Here's what happens: It is 1969 in Pittsburgh. Memphis Lee intends to sell the restaurant that no one comes to except five other members of the cast, where they are waited on by surly, slow-motion Risa. These five are: West, an undertaker from across the street who wants to buy up the restaurant for less than it's worth; Hambone, who is mentally retarded and fixated on a personal injustice of years gone by; Holloway, a wise old duffer who philosophizes over his coffee and I swear to God does absolutely nothing else (Roscoe Lee Browne is up for a Tony, a triumph for what wisdom can achieve all on its own); Sterling, a young unemployed potential criminal who falls in love with Risa, for no evident reason except that she is the only woman in the play and the only person his own age; and Wolf, a numbers runner. In the course of eight scenes that take place in a single week, Memphis sells his restaurant for a good price, Hambone dies in his sleep, and Sterling is saved from a life of crime and gets Risa by virtue of betting on the day's winning number. He gets only half of what the payout should have been, so for a scene or two it's touch and go whether Sterling will accommodate himself to half a loaf or seek revenge on Wolf. That's all there is.

Wilson, as usual, knows how to make people talk in an amiable, plausible, down-home way, but even in this respect *Two Trains* is a bit wonky, since Hambone's particular form of obsession, repeating the same phrase over and over at the top of his lungs, is schematic to say the least, and not finally believable, while the shtick that Cynthia Martells is stuck with, in the role of Risa, delivering each cup of coffee and each line at the slowest possible speed, comes to seem predictable and overdone, and not finally believable. Such exaggerations are the stuff of farce, but Wilson is after a patina of naturalism, and it is a miscalculation to sacrifice that for a few easy laughs.

Even so, *Two Trains Running* is up for a Tony as Best Play of the year. I doubt it stands a chance to beat *Dancing at Lughnasa*, which is just as edifying and politically correct—and nowhere near as dull—and it is actually a cut above John Guare's pretentious and arty *Four Baboons Adoring the Sun*. The only play on the Tony short list that I would credit with being truly any good, which ought to be required of anything deemed Best, is Richard Nelson's *Two Shakespearean*

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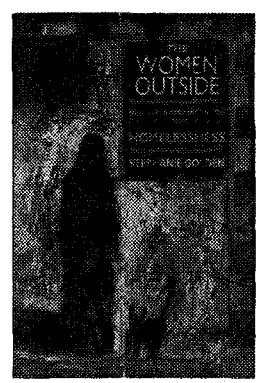


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# LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 770*)

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*New York City*

Given my premise—that the Partnership is motivated by politics, not science—it was predictable that Thomas Hedrick would resort to platitudes and cant to blow off unwanted scrutiny. (He accuses me of "inaccuracies" and "quotes used out of context," but doesn't name a single one.) Does he dispute that unchecked consumption of tobacco and alcohol poses a health risk for teenagers? Or that such behavior can open the window on illegal drug use? Hedrick might want to address that established epidemiology, should he ever decide to broaden his focus. As to my "warped conspiracy theories," what I reported, based on the Partnership's own records, was a classic conflict of interest. The Partnership accepts millions of dollars from the manufacturers of tobacco, alcohol and pills while producing ads that overlook the health risks associated with those contributors' products. With all its power to influence young people, the Partnership should start targeting legal drugs—and stop taking money from their manufacturers.

*Cynthia Cotts*

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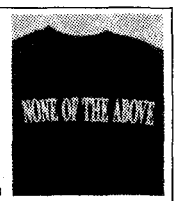


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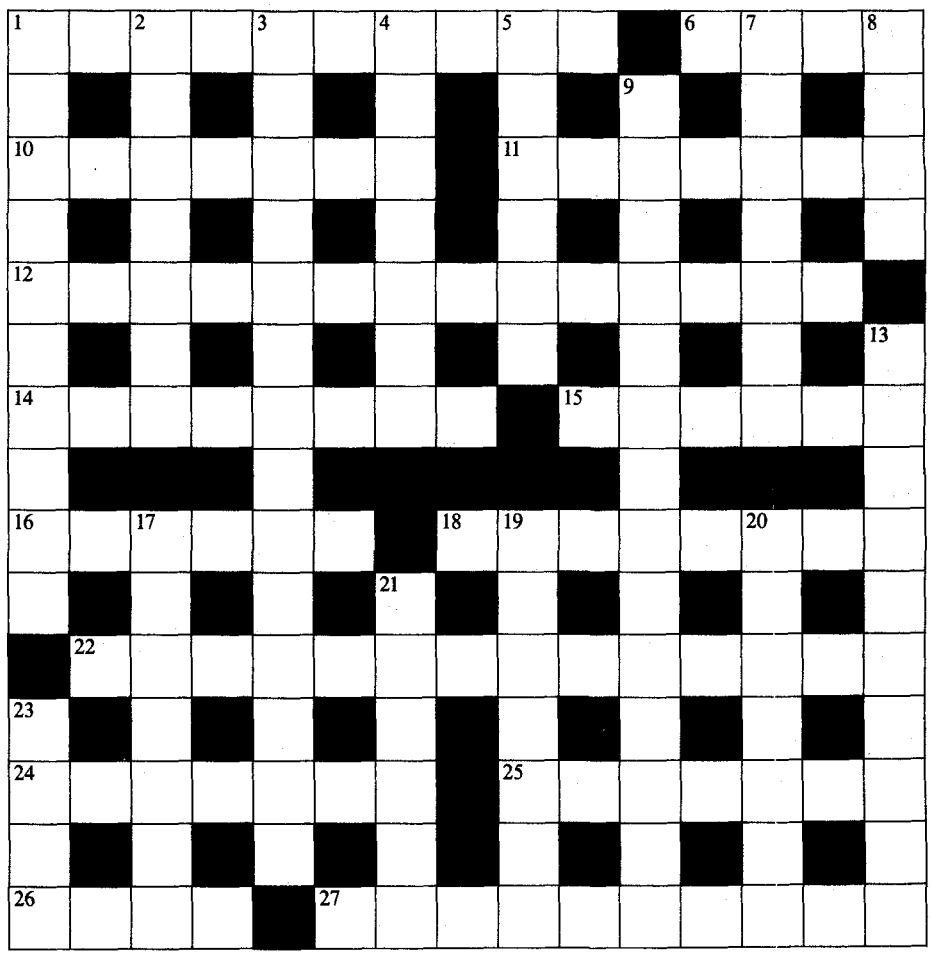
# Crossword Puzzle No. 2386

FRANK W. LEWIS



### ACROSS

1 and 6 A couple of those things held in Montreal some time ago? Certainly! (But one hopes the picture you took isn't one.) (6,8)
10 The way a bounder might talk about a body! (7)
11 The old gag used to be that she was pure as the snow until she did this. (7)
12 Angels and such might find standing here important. (Athletics are a part of it, too.) (8,6)
14 To confuse assets is to describe those who have the most sauce, alternatively. (8)
15 What Turner sometimes did, came to a wretched ending. (6)
16 Second is not the best position, but some players have strings attached to it. (6)
18 It might recede with age, but you can get a letter by such as Qantas. (8)
22 Because of him, a famous dancer got something on a silver platter. (4,3,7)
24 They might be expected to play in the woods. (7)
25 When one is down, how could it be praised! (7)
26 and 5 down Underplays something, but you might have to put your foot down on one of these to keep things quiet. (4,6)
27 According to such as Amy and Jo, such people might be nags. (10)

### DOWN

1 Make something less secret, but defy Division One inside it. (10)
2 Do a take-off, perhaps. (7)
3 What the unemployed swain might make flower? (4-2-8)
4 A pearl's just the sort of thing that could fit with the lobes. (7)
5 See 26 across
7 How to make that crazy nut, David's ancestress, lie. (7)
8 See 23 down
9 They just don't like people to turn this into smart ships. (14)
13 What Alice and Tom Sawyer had in common. (10)
17 If fall is imminent, people shouldn't go to sleep this way. (4,3)
19 It might prove a bad use for music in the morning! (7)
20 Flatter in the most sincere way? (7)
21 Such an old-fashioned description of a woman should be closely followed, by the sound of it. (6)
23 and 8 The ultimate design of the deities, or perhaps their bottoms, should be welcome to many people. (8)

### PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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